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A Reformed Weekly

DECEMBER 13, 1991/47th year of publication/No. 2286

Vanier calls for communities to connect to God's Spirit

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — Jean Vanier came to understand what his place in life would be when he invited two poor and handicapped people to live at his house, said Henri Nouwen when he introduced Vanier to a capacity-crowd at Toronto's St. Paul's Anglican Church.

Raised in one of Quebec's leading families, Vanier has lived his life among the severely disabled. His public addresses are deeply moving because he has the gift of speaking to that place in his hearers that is wounded, said Nouwen.

Vanier is the founder and guiding spirit of L'Arche communities, of which there are 93 worldwide. He spoke at a fundraising benefit for the largest of the communities, called Daybreak. It is located in Richmond Hill, Ont., the place where Nouwen lives.

Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, cut off from the Spirit, their source, was Vanier's text. There is much anguish, anger, fear and violence today, experienced by people cut off from their source, he said, even though the Gospel is bringing life in whole new areas like eastern Europe.

What do people do when they are drying up, are insecure? he asked. They may try to cling to a secure past, searching for roots that are secure. But then they are curling up inside themselves. They may become depressed. But instead we need to stand up, welcome the stranger and build together in the spirit of Christ.

Giving life to people

In his travels to L'Arche communities around the world, Vanier met Helen in the Philippines. Helen is a small girl, blind and all curled up. She doesn't interact with the world around her. She shows no joy or anger, nothing. Depression is hidden deeply inside. The woman who cared for Helen was getting desperate. Vanier asked her to care for Helen with love, and one day she would smile. In the end she did.

It's through listening that we build trust and in that we give life to people, said Vanier. We then reveal to people their beauty. One who is not loved is desperately lonely. Loneliness provokes anger, and lonely people feel guilty because they assume it's their own fault that they aren't loved.

But love is dangerous, he added. In loving we risk ourselves and lose some freedom. We may be rejected. A child that is loved is at peace, but is still very vulnerable. A child does not love with generosity or without expectation of gain. But a child trusts, and in trusting offers him- or herself.

We all need community, insists Vanier. Community requires that we love and trust people as they are, with their egos and fears. It is in community that people are brought to freedom.

There is no greater security on earth than in a group of people who love each other just as they are. We all need a place of love. Says Vanier, only God can give the Spirit to enable us to love people we despise. Jesus came to give us renewed hearts to make that possible.

The tall, angular, white-haired Vanier knows from experience what he is talking about.

In this issue:

What do peppermints have to do with faith? Find out from Bert Witvoet and Truus Heemskerk..p.10

Do Christian schools need to go back to the basics? asks Nicholas Buma.....p.11

Lawyer Bert Bakker continues his "Letters to Sean" about representing the guilty.....p.12

Thinkbit:

Where we are tenacious and charming, someone else is stubborn and manipulative.

Overheard at a banquet.

Pal Forgon's 600 member congregation worships in the Reformed Church of Beregszasz, pictured at left.

'Christ for Russia' hopes to establish Soviet seminaries

Photos: courtesy Nick Vogelzang

The "kitchen class seminary" of Beregszasz, Ukraine, meets with leader Pal Forgon, second from right.

Bill Fledderus

AURORA, Colo. — A group of Christian Reformed and Presbyterian Christians believes that several Soviet cities would be willing to donate land for the building of Christian seminaries.

The group, which calls itself "Christ for Russia," has heard of several Soviet mayors pledging city land. For example, the Light of the Gospel Mission in Kiev, an organization with 70 full- and 100 part-time missionaries, has received land offers to start new churches.

The Denver Conservative Seminary is another Christian group which has received Soviet acreage. It is sending nine professors to Rovno, 160 km. east of Poland. Some arrived and began work already in August and a second seminary has already sprung up.

Rev. Nick Vogelzang, executive director of Christ for Russia, asks, "If the Soviets will donate to them, why not to us?"

Seminary in a kitchen

The main contacts of Christ for Russia (a bit of a misnomer since the former U.S.S.R. is not to be confused with the republic of Russia) are in the Ukraine, near the Hungarian border. A Reformed seminary already exists there, in Beregszasz (the Hungarian name for Bergovo) — though it has no funds, professors or books. In actuality, the "kitchen class seminary" as it is called, centres around Pal Forgon, an older pastor who is lecturing 12 students based on his "notes of yesteryear." Forgon once spent five years in a Siberian labour camp.

The lack of a Reformed seminary is a serious problem because there are 86 Reformed churches in western Ukraine alone, and only 21 pastors. According to Christ for Russia estimates, the construction or acquisition of a seminary is also financially viable: $50,000 U.S. will buy a Soviet campus equivalent to a $1.25 million American one.

The U.S. has approximately 500 evangelical seminaries, though only four or five are being planned for locations in the former U.S.S.R., as far as Vogelzang knows. He says, "The church has not yet begun putting a solid educational foundation under the emerging church in Russia."

The mission is urgent

Vogelzang warns that cults are already very active in the former U.S.S.R. He cites the example of three Armenian hospitals recently built by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons). Vogelzang feels the urgency of his group's mission whenever he thinks of the increasing push being put forth, for example, by the Islamic religion.

One of Christ for Russia's committees is searching for a retired seminary president or professor to preside over the Soviet seminaries. Staffing, curriculum, land, and so on, are all being discussed. The group is considering a circuit-riding model for its instructors and already has three Russian-speaking professors who have volunteered to teach in the former U.S.S.R.

Another committee is working on an evangelical, interdenominational catechism for Soviet peoples, a project claimed to be "of the highest priority" by groups such as the Slavic Gospel Association, the Back to God Hour and the International Bible Society, all of whom work in the former Soviet Union. A printer has promised the group 50,000 free copies of that catechism once it is translated.

Vogelzang points out that the *Heidelberg Catechism* was reportedly printed in Ukrainian in 1956 but no copies seem to be extant.

Hungarian-style Calvinists in Ukraine

At one of its recent weekly meetings in Aurora, Colorado (just outside of Denver), the board of Christ for Russia read a letter from Alice Wisse, a correspondent in Saraspotak, Hungary, who had just visited the Beregszasz "kitchen seminary."

Wisse explains that the people of the Beregszasz area have a lot of ties with Hungary and the Hungarian Reformed Church. They "speak Ukranian in business but Hungarian in church. They have been a persecuted church and thus their devotion to the Reformed faith is very strong."

"They hold to the five points of Calvinism," Wisse continues, "use the Heidelberg and the Helvetic catechisms, believe with Kuyper in the sovereignty of God, baptize infants, practise Hungarian burial rites and religious marriage ceremonies, observe the Lord's Supper, conduct Bible studies for large groups of young people the year-round and are zealous for evangelical outreach."

Wisse also points out that in general the Beregszaszians need food, "even the very basics," and are quite poor.

News

Accord is a big step toward peace in El Salvador

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — The accord signed in September in New York by the government of El Salvador and the FMLN rebels gives Salvadoran society supremacy over the military, reports the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America (ICCHRLA).

In spite of the fact that El Salvador has an elected democratic government, military, police and paramilitary groups hold the real power over daily affairs, say observers. This is the country where six Jesuit priests, their cook and her daughter were murdered in cold blood in 1989, a sample of regular killings in the country.

There has also been fighting for many years between the forces of the powerful elite and the left-wing rebels who have controlled considerable land in the nation, ICCHRLA says. Both sides, and the country as a whole, have been worn down by the warfare.

A "Commission for Consolidation of Peace" has been formed which will oversee that process of change. It will consist of representatives of the government, the rebels and political parties. The archbishop and a U.N. official will be observers.

Another significant point of the agreement includes a purging of human rights violators from the armed forces, and a reduction in the size of the army. The armed forces will be subject to constitutional authorities and its role will be redefined to be based on respect for the rule of law, reports ICCHRLA.

Move toward pluralism

The intent is to dissolve the present security forces — the National Guard, the Treasury Police and the National Police — and define a new security force that would be pluralistic.

Land reform is included in the agreement to the extent that property larger than 245 hectares in areas held by the rebels will be redistributed among landless campesinos and small farmers.

ICCHRLA notes that El Salvador still has a long way to go to become a safe country: Mirtala Lopez, leader of the Christian Committee for the Displaced of El Salvador, recently received her fourth death threat in 10 days. On one occasion armed men, in full view of soldiers, surrounded her office and posted a death threat. She was quickly given a visa to the United States, even though the U.S. has not readily granted visas to Salvadorans on the grounds of persecution.

Christian Business Federation aims to broaden its appeal

Bill Fledderus

BURLINGTON, Ont. — The Canadian Christian Business Federation, a seven-year-old group of professionals and business people, used to be called the Reformed Christian Business and Professional Organization. The CCBF hopes its new name will appeal to Christians of various stripes.

The name change, officially adopted by the membership on Sept. 10, is meant to send an inviting message to Christians from churches without the word "Reformed" in their name.

"The name change doesn't mean we're changing our basic philosophy," points out CCBF's executive director, Hans Vanderstoep. "Rather, we feel that as it is, our organization has something to offer to the wider Christian community and we wanted our name to reflect that."

Though "born and raised" in the Reformed community, the organization does not see itself as parochial. It is following an example set by other originally Reformed groups such as the Christian Farmers Federation and the Christian Labour Association of Canada.

The CCBF is the only Christian business group in Canada that focuses on integrating faith and business, according to Vanderstoep. While CCBF discusses public policy, stewardship, Christian management practices and organizational structures, other Canadian groups are more interested in evangelism and renewing the spiritual lives of business people.

The CCBF has about 320 members although that figure is "subject to change without notice," says Vanderstoep. The group is currently in the middle of a membership campaign, organized at the chapter level by the existing membership.

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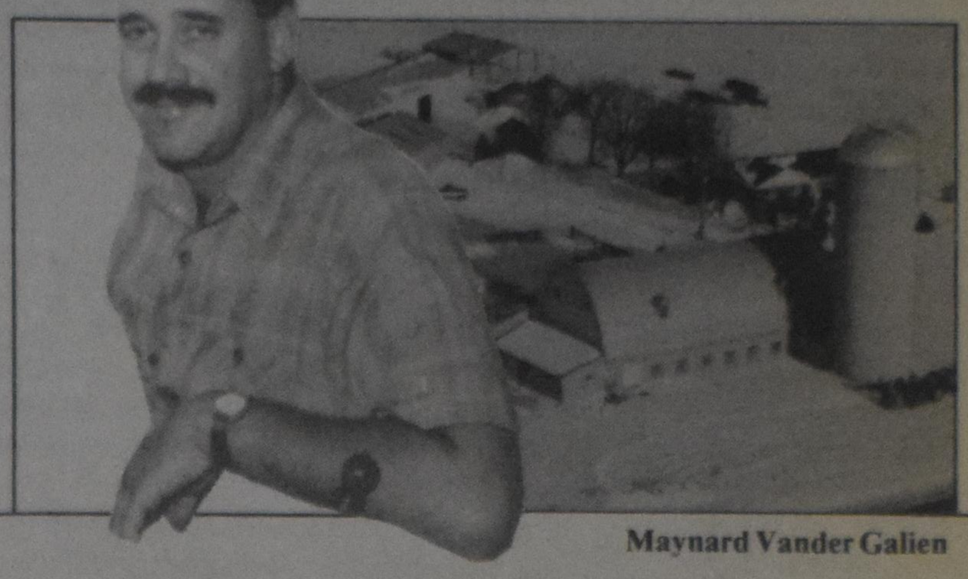


Maynard Vander Galien

Farming is not an easy life

Worried, nervous, scared are a few words most frequently expressed by Canadian farmers studying the present direction of the international trade talks.

I attended the three-day annual convention of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture in Toronto last month and listened to farmers, farm leaders and politicians. There was very little optimism expressed, but lots of pessimism.

The present round of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) negotiations has been deadlocked since December 1990 over cuts in farm subsidies. The European community (EC), led by a French-German alliance, has offered a 30 per cent cut in subsidies and import barriers.

But members of the Cairns group, made up of large grain-exporting countries including Canada, United States, New Zealand, Australia, Argentina and Brazil, have (with the exception of Canada) been pushing for the removal of all government subsidies.

Lower prices through competition

The rationale for eliminating subsidies and letting the free market control food prices is to promote lower prices through competition.

But farmers and farm leaders argue that to justifty the investment required for a farming operation a certain level of income must be assured. Canadian farmers have millions of dollars invested in quotas which gives them the right and responsibility to produce a certain amount of food such as milk, eggs and turkeys on a regular basis in return for a guaranteed price which includes their cost of production.

The United States government is under pressure to maintain a cheap food policy, especially with a presidential election coming in 1992.

Political pressure on European negotiators from heavily subsidized farmers there has been enough to keep the EC on the Canadian side in opposition to the U.S. position.

The misery of Canada's farmers dominated many hours of television news and serious Question Periods in the House of Commons. Mike Harris, leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, said that the farm income crisis, especially in western Ontario and western Canada, is unprecedented. Real incomes, after inflation is taken into account, are lower than during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

But despite all the financial problems Canadian farmers are experiencing, they are meek compared to the European farmers. Up to 200,000 French farmers demonstrated in Paris on a recent Sunday against EC farm reforms that would impose output quotas and subsidize incomes instead of production.

Politicians' views

What did the politicians tell the 400 farm delegates at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture convention? Liberal leader Jean Chretien, the guest speaker at the "Presidents' Wine & Cheese Reception," told the farmers that he was on their side. Ontario (NDP) treasurer Floyd Laughren told the gathering that the Ontario debt of $40 billion will rise to $80 billion at the end of the NDP's four-year term. No more throwing money at problems. Ontario Agriculture Minister Buchanan said agriculture is recognized as second after the auto industry and before the tourinst industry. "But I'll be blunt. With spring planting only a few months away, farmers cannot expect more government emergency money to cover costs. This government is under severe fiscal restraint."

Former Liberal Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan (1972-1984), looking trim and fit and sporting his green hat, told convention delegates that supply management was taken out with the Free Trade talks and not the GATT negotiations, as some would have us believe.

Christian atmosphere

There was, inspite of all the gloom and doom, a real Christian atmosphere present during the busy three-day convention. Jack VanderKooy, past-president of the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, led the invocation. Mr. VanderKooy gave a biblical message and read a poem about God's greatness. Before the convention delegates leave the convention hall for lunch, each day, everyone is requested to stand and a prayer is said asking God's blessings. That's been so since I attended the first convention 10 years ago.

Maynard Vander Galien farms in the Ottawa Valley (Renfrew) and writes weekly, bi-weekly and monthly "Rural Route" columns.

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl

Auditor General Denis Desautels delivered the usual lament about wasted money. His audit drew attention in the press, but like they say in good old England, "Yesterday's news is tomorrow's fish wrapping." The universe will continue to unfold as governments all over the world will continue to spend money like sailors on shore leave.

★ ★ ★

Monsieur went on a national unity tour telling separatists that independence will be a costly affair. Frere Jacques Parizeau thinks that life after separation will be economic moonlight and roses. He preaches that old "chicken in every pot" message, but our prime minister, in fine fettle, I may add, is warning Quebecers to count the costs. He predicted that Quebec will become an impoverished, insignificant backwater if it separates from Canada. I presume that foregoing Canada's old age pension will not be all that terribly popular, and so mindful of the fact that money still talks a mean streak, even in politics, I am cautiously optimistic about our country's future. The Prime Minister did a short disc jockey stint in Toronto. He read the sports scores and the weather forecast on a local radio station. Perhaps he will get some job offers.

★ ★ ★

Our Unity Minister had his hands full. He had a rather unpleasant meeting with the Assembly of First Nations; and the Quebec wing of the Tory caucus is not making life easier for Clark, either. It is admirable how this man, in the words of Dalton Camp, "once the prime minister, briefly tenured and cheerfully cast aside" keeps plugging away at his very difficult assignment. Three cheers here for Joe Clark! He is like a duck — calm and unruffled on the surface, but paddling like you know what underneath.

★ ★ ★

If we're recovering from the recession we must be doing it at a snail's pace: bankruptcies are up; there are panhandlers all over Toronto; even IBM is in trouble; and churches are having to wage the battle of the budget. It's a bit like recovering from the flu only to wake up with a bout of malaria. Signs of prosperity are still noticeable, though: *The Globe and Mail* is now on sale in Florida. There are apparently enough snowbirds to make that a worthwhile venture. I also read an article which stated that pet food is still selling well. We might have hungry children in this country, but, by golly, we're taking care of our pets. And hundreds of people paid $500 to listen to Monsieur at a rubber-chicken dinner. A week earlier Jean Chretien had charged the faithful only $400 for the privilege of listening to him.

★ ★ ★

During the first week of Advent the world observed AIDS day and the country observed Anti-Violence Against Women Week. We also remembered Pearl Harbour: and personally I was reminded of the beginning of the December 7 Division. Pain of the present and the past becloud the peace on earth — memories that cling to the mind like a piece of stale bread in the stomach.

★ ★ ★

Canada made it to the front page of the *New York Times*, albeit not in very flattering fashion. The article mentions that Canadian trash is increasingly landing in U.S. dumps. Tipping fees for the garbage trucks in Ontario are $150 a metric ton, while dumps in New York charge about $35. So that's how Ontario's garbage winds up in the state of New York.

★ ★ ★

The political situation in what was the Soviet Union is as clear as mud. Ukraine is now an independent nation. Our government, mindful of a good million Unkrainian votes in the country, was quick to establish diplomatic relations. That was celebrated with champagne and caviar while people in Kiev stood in line for milk. The questions remain: "Who will shoulder the Soviet Union's huge debt? Who will control the nuclear arsenal? What will happen to Gorbachev's cottage in Ukraine? Who will feed the people?

For a measure of madness bedeviling Soviet consumers, consider the ruble. Two weeks ago a dollar was worth 32 rubles, now it's 90 rubles to the dollar. Soviet pensioners are getting less than 200 rubles a month. Yet a pair of jeans costs 1,200 rubles; and the cost of eggs has gone up 120 per cent in just a month.

★ ★ ★

Middle East peace talks were stalled by Israel, which refused to show up at the appointed time. Shamir the Stubborn will make his entrance at the time and day of his own choosing. In the meantime the Israeli government took steps toward starting a new settlement in the occupied West Bank — a very effective way to poison the wells of the peace conference.

★ ★ ★

If at first you don't succeed...: Khieu Samphan, the Khmer Rouge official who was responsible for Cambodia's killing fields and who was almost lynched when he first returned to the country, will try to enter again, this time with military escort.

★ ★ ★

The American hostages held by the Holy War fanatic nuts have now returned home. The joy of their homecoming did cover somewhat the anger for the atrocities committed. Anyone who can call any war "holy" has left his or her brain at the door; and any party that can keep people imprisoned under conditions that the hostages have endured is not endowed with much humanity.

★ ★ ★

President Bush lost his right-hand man, John H. Sununu. Sununu's nevermind-spending-sprees, and his pit bull approach to human resource management had made him a liability at the White House.

Daffy Duke of the South has also declared himself a candidate for the presidency. Right wing parties are gaining influence all over the world. Europe, too, has its share of right-wingers who have no sympathy for immigrants and mulitculturalism.

★ ★ ★

Britain is voicing all kinds of reservations about the shaping of closer monetary and political union with its European Community partners. The 12 European nations will sit down together in the Netherlands, with England playing the role of the reluctant partner.

★ ★ ★

Hold the candles: no Columbus festivals will be held in Canada. A government spokesperson said that instead, a panel has recommended that Ottawa spend its money on the upcoming 125th anniversary of the nation.

Remember the 100-year splash? Expo? It was a kinder and gentler time just 25 years ago. I took the kids to Montreal and saw a sign that said, "Free Parking." It was on an island; the parking was indeed free, but I had to shell out an awful lot of money to get off that island again.

★ ★ ★

The mailcarrier brought me an anonymous letter this morning. That reminded me of a famous preacher who received a letter with a clean sheet of paper containing only one word written: "Fool!" The next Sunday the reverend carried the letter into his pulpit. Holding it up, he announced, "I have received many letters from people who wrote the letter but forgot to sign their names. However, this is the first time I have received a letter from someone who signed his name and forgot to write the letter."

★ ★ ★

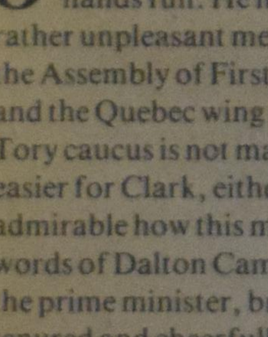
Here is a cynical conclusion: King Midas they say, possessed the art of turning whatsoever he touched into gold. There are many politicians now who can reverse that with ease: touch them with gold, and they'll turn into what you please.

Carl Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and a chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.

To know yourself in your corruption seems an unlikely requirement when you're training to lift people's spirits. But according to Dirk Evans, who instructs chaplains for hospital ministry, "you've got to start with your own brokenness before grace can empower you to serve others."

Evans mentors clergy who represent Baptist, Catholic, Missionary Alliance, United and Christian Reformed churches. Some are young, others seek to refocus the nature of their ministry. In their hospital setting, their daily routine provides the group's case material. Human needs and theology must mesh and make sense. That's where self-knowledge comes in.

Where chaplains meet a hurting world, a spirit of humility equips them to approach people in Jesus' name. Aware how He has worked in their own lives, chaplains are able to use their gifts and insights to effectively minister in a broken world, wherever the Great Physician places them.



Dirk Evans trains people in pastoral care at Toronto Western Hospital, Toronto, ON

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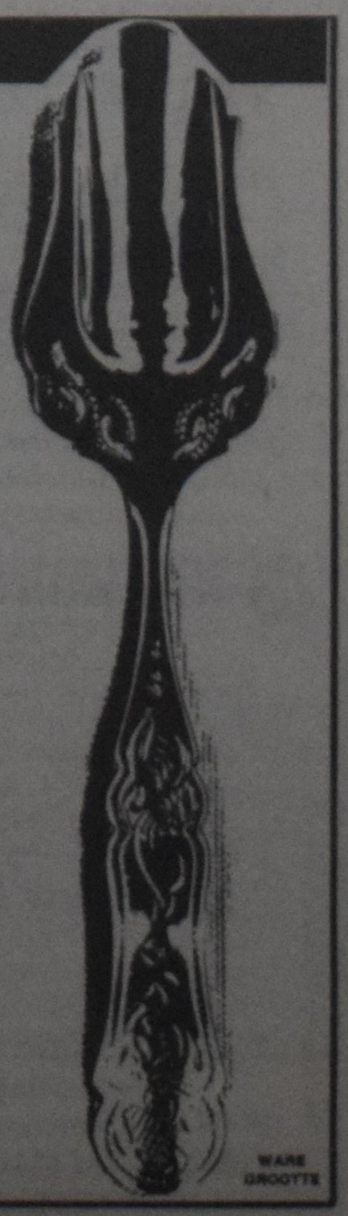

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Christ is a down-to-earth downtown drifter

He once had a 16-person plumbing crew working for him in Toronto. Today he spends much of his time fighting a hopeless battle against booze. Some weeks he is dry and some weeks he's off the wagon again. The afternoon I met him at the ministry centre in Oshawa called Gate 3:16, where George Witvoet and Mabel Dittrick act as co-ordinators, he was in a blessed but thoroughly soused state of mind.

He had brought an evergreen branch as a Christmas decoration for the centre, and two antique glass candleholders. He challenged George to identify the branch. Was it pine or spruce? Could the tall Dutchman, whom he later with tears in his eyes announced as the finest person in the whole world, tell the difference? When he found out I was George's brother he held my hand in his two hands and, in his drunken but wonderfully warm way, said how happy he was to make my acquaintance (there sometimes *is* a similarity between children and drunks). George's strength came from above, he said. Where did my strength come from?

"From the same direction," I said, much to his approval.

Lesson in strength

His eyes fell on a young man who had come into our circle. "Have you quit smoking?" he asked him. "Don't lie to me. You lie when you say you don't smoke anymore."

"It's hard to quit when you are addicted, you know," the young man answered somewhat timidly.

Whereupon the drunken believer launched into a lecture on how it takes a *man* to quit, not a weakling. "Stop feeling sorry for yourself," he said. "Don't whine about how difficult it is." It took me a while to sense the irony of that statement, mainly because at the time I did not know whether it was coming from someone who was mentally disturbed or someone under the influence of a liquid easily obtained at the hotel across the street.

"Do you know the word 'haggle'?" he asked me.

"Haggle means you try to get the lowest price," I answered.

"No, no, when a pig has eaten too much at the trough, he can't keep up with the other animals as they return to the field. He haggles behind them." He made a slow, strangely rhythmic motion with his body. "You are haggling," he told the young man sternly. He turned to me with an aside: "I'm trying to help the lad. He has a problem."

I had very little faith in his imposition of will, but I did feel that he was exhibiting a sense of community here at the centre. These lonely people show concern for each other, I thought.

The burden of rejection

Behind a partition I met another group of men of various ages watching a Christian video on the occult. One of them, an elderly man, was slumped in his chair, seemingly asleep. "He hears everything we say," George told me. The man raised his head and greeted us, making a comment on how he liked our coats. It was obvious that the had not been sleeping. Later, George told me that the man had been forsaken by his wife and children and that the emotional burden weighed him down to the point where he was not able to keep his head up. He had seen a doctor about it but there was nothing physically wrong with him.

Still later George and I went to a nearby restaurant for a chocolate drink and onion rings. Several of the centre's clients drifted in at various times. Again it struck me that they formed some kind of community. One of them, a young woman, had an arm missing, as well as several fingers on the remaining hand. According to George she had been severely depressed a few years ago and had thrown herself underneath a train. She cheerfully greeted George and told him how others had complimented her on the blue coat she was wearing. It had been provided by the centre, I found out.

She was soon joined by other street friends. There was an easy kind of comraderie noticeable among the group. Above all, there was complete honesty. They had hit bottom and there was little to be ashamed of or self conscious about.

A place for sharing

Just before Christmas there was going to be a big celebration at the centre, George told me. The place would be packed — "sardine time." Someone had already brought in boxes of goods that afternoon in response to a request in the Gate 3:16 news bulletin for various items.

In a note from a volunteer, also published in the Gate 3:16 news bulletin, I read the following description of the atmosphere in the centre: "I've been a volunteer for four months. Words cannot express the love of God that takes place here. Gate 3:16 is a starting point for some and a strengthening place for others. It is run by Christian volunteers caring for the abused and neglected, homeless and hungry, young and old. It is for people with mental and physical disabilities, people with any addiction or just looking to discover the Lord and for a deeper walk with the Lord. A place for laughter! A place for tears! A place for Jesus!"

Flow of blessings

Isn't it strange how the brokenness of other people breaks down the walls of those who have come to help them? One of the problems of our secular society is that people don't know how to open up to each other, how to be a neighbourhood or the Body of Christ. Those who are broken can heal us of this disease. It's more blessed to receive than to give.

"Praise the Lord for the man who stopped at the traffic light, jumped out of his truck and ran into the Gate with a $100 dollar bill for the centre's needs," I read in the news bulletin. It's also more blessed to give than to receive.

As George and I drove away from Gate 3:16, halting at an intersection, the inebriated saint walked past our car. As soon as he saw us, his face lit up. He stopped at the front bumper and made an attempt at giving us the sign of peace and the cross at the same time. Although his arteries were filled with alcohol, his heart was filled with love.

As he continued on his journey and we on ours, it occurred to me that he was "haggling." But he was headed in the direction of Gate 3:16, which in reality is John 3:16, which promises that God's love is so great for this world that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

BW

Letters

Conservatives are not reactionaries

Recently *Calvinist Contact* (Nov. 1), published a letter by Rev. Herman Praamsma calling those who are thinking of leaving the Christian Reformed Church to think again. Lately there has been a spate of such letters which are mostly remarkable for their achievement of a tone at once both whining and bullying.

The irony is that while calling for unity these letters underscore disunity and add fuel to the fire. How could it be otherwise when the vision of unity has been reduced to a plea to agree to disagree about matters "indifferent"? The same spirit which puts organizational unity in the chief place ahead of confessional unity will necesarily trivialize the rocky issues upon which our unity founders. This trivialization is in itself divisive.

Praamsma begins by setting up a number of inflammatory strawmen under the irenic heading of "things that border on slander." He represents someone (?) somewhere (?) as saying, "There is a plan to make the CRC as liberal as possible so that Home Missions can realize its dream of gathering 400,000 by 2000! This explains the concerted effort to lead people away from the Word of God!"

Crediting Rev. Praamsma with motives as pure as the driven snow will not alter the fact that this darkens and emotionally beclouds. The palpable truth is that conservatives do not believe: 1) that there is any "plan" to make the CRC 2) "as liberal as possible" so that 3) "the board of Home Missions can realize its dream..." nor that 4) "this explains the concerted effort...."

A counter-productive path

What conservatives do believe is 1) not that somewhere there is some deep, dark, secret conspiracy, but rather, that many, particularly in our leadership, have been unduly influenced by the spirit of our age. Is this *so* outside of the realm of possibility, *so* bizarre, *so* very scoffable?

Conservatives also believe 2) not that there is any "intention" to be "as liberal as possible" but rather that there is a strong delusion which seeks to be as conservative as possible while still going along with the spirit of the age. Those who are under this peculiar influence, Dukakis-like, resent the "liberal" label. To their minds it seems at best the presumptuous imposition of a half-truth. But floating in pods and taking their bearings from one another, would they be less dismayed by "drifters"?

With regard to Home Missions, conservatives also believe 3) not *evil* intentions, but rather *good* intentions are driving them along a mistaken and counterproductive path. Conservatives sense that there is a spirit which indiscriminately blames "lack of growth" on whatever is distinctly reformed. Conservatives fear that Home Mission's obvious infatuation with the methods of Schuler, Hybels and Wimber — coupled with a "mainline Protestant theology" — will make it virtually certain that we decline in number and influence.

Again, conservatives believe 4) not that there is "a concerted effort to lead people away from the Word of God," but rather, that the cumulative effect of many small compromises has already led to a distancing from the Word of God. No one is speaking of a total defection except those who perversely insist on misunderstanding....

Each side suspicious

These issues raise emotions to a high pitch. But neither side should let anything deter them from seeing the real contentions. Conservatives *insist* that the creation controversy and the women in office controversy and a whole host of things far more trivial are *symptoms of a diseased view of and relationship to Scripture*. Liberals (for lack of a better term) *insist* that these are *not symptoms of disease* but rather *expressions of a continuing vitality*. Each side is suspicious of the other's view of Scripture.

But surely both sides could agree that "Scripture" is worthy to be weighed against organizational unity? If it isn't, nothing is. Certain "calls for unity" are divisive — give the impression at least, of a trivial estimation of truth. I've seen worse than Praamsma's.

Rather than trying to have their cake and eat it too; rather than insisting that conservatives not only put up, but also shut up, we should expect that people will have the courage of their convictions. For myself, the certainty that more and more will have that courage makes certain both the rise of a new denomination and the fall of an old one.

Oh, we're not quite the dim reactionaries we're made out to be. Our goal is a true and full-orbed unity; a loving fellowship; a profound worship; a wholehearted giving; an informed stewardship; prayerfulness; a consuming word; wise instruction; zealous evangelism; an engaged mission activity; the fear of God bold toward others; ecumenicism with *integrity*; confessions held vitally; professions with fidelity — neither pale ghost, nor unnatural progeny, but the Reformed biblical faith! Not some minimum — The breadth, the length, the depth, the height! Last call.

John M. De Koekkoek
Agassiz, B.C.

Don't thwart the mission of the church

I feel sad that so much time and effort can be spent on a small minority of people who choose to make a big fuss over a few issues. I just wonder how many people could have been reached for Christ by the hours spent on this subject.

There is a high price to pay for this. It's not worth the cost.

Consider all the hurt in families in which members have disassociated themselves with the rest of the family. Is that in the name of the Lord? I don't believe it! It's a crime. (Galatians 5: 26 says "We must not be proud or irritate one another or be jealous of one another.")

Consider how this hurts our outreach to the world through Coffee Break, through Home and World Missions. (I can't imagine any church member witholding money from missions. Can you?)

It also hurts our Christian institutions of learning. Our children and young people need good Christ-like male and female role models! (At present some of our church male models leave a bit to be desired, don't you think?)

Sometimes, I get the feeling it is more exciting for some people to get on the bandwagon and be against something (which creates destruction such as fighting, jealousy, and anger — Gal. 5) than to honestly get in touch with themselves and with the Lord. (Eph. 3: 16: "I ask God to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves....")

For those who are in search of the perfect church, rest assured there will not be one before the Lord returns. Why? Because there are no perfect members to join.

Let's agree to disagree on some issues but not on the most important issue, the mission of the church.

Do we want excitement, something for which to get on the bandwagon? Then let's be a part of watching new Christians grow in the Lord! (Eph. 2: 8-10: It's all grace.)

It's exciting to see people use their gifts in the church for the Lord and to watch their faith grow (Eph. 4). It's exciting when we get together to pray; it's exciting to have prayers answered.

The church needs to continue the work Jesus started. (Read the Gospels, Acts and Gal. 5: 16).

We all have our work cut out for us: search the Scriptures with an open heart and mind; let's search our hearts, check our motives; pray for understanding; mature in the faith; grow up in the Lord. Is our spirit being controlled by the Spirit of God (Eph. 3: 14-20; Eph. 4: 14-16)? "The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and self-control" (Gal. 5: 22-23). The Spirit gives life.

My prayer for the church is Jesus' prayer in John 17: "Keep the church safe from the evil one....Keep us safe by the *power* of your name....I pray that they may all be one, Father...so that the world will believe that you sent me."

Gerry Fisher
Brooklin, Ont.

Defenders of AWARE reveal agenda

Mr. Witvoet and the editorial advisory committee of C.C. are to be commended for their clear and courageous stand regarding AWARE and the issue of homosexuality in general. Contrary to the opinion of some within the "gay" community, you constantly show a willingness to dialogue and to reach out in compassion and Christian love. Apologists for AWARE have now made it abundantly clear that they want the Christian Reformed Church to accept practising homosexuals and lesbians without equivocation. AWARE's idea of dialoguing is to rescind the decision made by the 1973 Synod, to, in fact, capitulate and ignore the scriptural teachings on this issue. What then do we do with Romans 2: 24-27?

A passage in the Bible that comes to mind is John 8: 11. Jesus said to the woman who had been caught in adultery, "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin." This applies to all sinful lifestyles, whether that be personal greed, gossiping, jealousy, or homosexuality. It's only by renouncing that lifestyle coupled with heartfelt repentance that forgiveness can follow. I'm also convinced that the Holy Spirit will then equip *all* of us forgiven sinners to more effectively fight Satan, his lies and temptations.

In conclusion, it appears to me that if homosexuals cannot, in all good conscience, accept the CRC's "official pronouncements" they should look for a new church family. There is at least one denomination in Canada that will accept them with open arms.

Philip Stel
Victoria, B.C.

BEYOND BELIEF

I'M SO EMBARRASSED. HOW COULD YOU NOT KNOW?
WHAT HAPPENED?
WE HAD SOME CHARISMATIC FRIENDS COME TO VISIT OUR CHURCH. AND, AS IS THEIR CUSTOM OF WORSHIP, THEY STOOD AND RAISED THEIR HANDS.
DAVE THOUGHT THEY WERE STARTING "THE WAVE".
HEY, THE WAVE IS A FORM OF WORSHIP.

Letters

How does faith originate?

Allow me to add a few thoughts to the column "Word and Spirit" written by Pastor Kuyvenhoven.

I am not criticizing the way he writes about the doctrine of election, because what he writes is the Reformed view, and not "hyper-Calvinistic." It is refreshing to hear the doctrine of election explained as a channel of God's love.

He mentions the *Canons of Dort* but does not quote them, as he uses biblical text to underline his point of view, which I think is a better way to make something clear. However, he reads the Bible through the glasses of the *Canons*; I tend to do the same thing. How understandable, being Reformed. I don't think, however, that that should keep us from putting a question mark here and there.

For one thing, I am thinking about the origin of our faith. The *Canons* find the origin in God's eternal decree. When the [Heidelberg] catechism asks the same question, it answers, "From the Holy Spirit." We see here a different terminology used.

There must be a reason for this. I shall not go into details to talk about the time when the *Canons* were written, or what theological errors [of the time] had to be corrected, but I dare say that (in my understanding) the *Canons* speak a scholastic, intellectual language while the catechism makes plain biblical statements.

That means in practical terms that I can pray to God to send his Spirit to work faith in me or in others. But to pray to God to change his unchangeable eternal decree is a different matter.

Mysterious subject

Pastor Kuyvenhoven speaks about the foreknowlegde of God, and this is another mysterious subject. Human beings are creatures set in time and space, but God is not. He lives in the "ever present." In the existence of God there is no before or after. This medium is used because we are time- and space-bound creatures. We have to keep this in mind, when we try to explain the foreknowledge of God.

I bring up these things because if we *continue* to reason along the lines of Pastor Kuyvenhoven and the *Canons* (which he did not because he is a wise man) we may come to strange conclusions.

If all the actions of us human beings originate in God's eternal decree, then we are no more than puppets and God is pulling the strings. That must be the ultimate outcome. The problem is, though, a puppet has no responsibility. But the Bible keeps us totally responsible. God created us as free agents and he wants to be served by free agents. The fact is, we are dead in sin and trespasses, so something has to change.

Our forebears confessed that God-fearing parents must not doubt the salvation of their children who died in their infancy. Why not? Because they did not carry any responsibility as yet, just like the puppet I just mentioned.

If in God's time we are confronted with the Gospel, then we are in another situation. I believe that those confronted with the Gospel will at that time receive from God, worked by his Spirit, the *ability* to choose for or against him. Not under pressure but as free agents, enabled by God, totally responsible.

If Pastor Kuyvenhoven wants to include this in the foreknowledge of God, fine with me.

By the way, I do not think that people with so-called Arminian tendencies are any less in the eyes of God, judging by the way he uses them to further his cause in this world. Good enough for him, good enough for me.

Bill van Oene
Welland, Ont.

Other mission work in Sierra Leone goes on

While we appreciate the factual coverage and assessment of CRWRC's program in the Krim area of Sierra Leone as reported in *Calvinist Contact*, we want to clarify that we worked with the Mende people in the Krim area, not the Kuranko people.

We wish to indicate as well that it was the apathy and deceit of a couple of our national Sierra Leoneon staff that was a problem. The vision, determination, honesty and dedication of our CRWRC staff and most of the national staff helped us achieve the successes that Christian Extension Services has had in the Krim area.

Dealing with closure of a program because it hasn't succeeded hasn't been easy for CRWRC. Annette conveys that in her article. Yet, we can give thanks for our success in Kuranko and Freetown and pray for God's continued blessing on the work that has been completed in the Krim area.

Ray Elgersma
Director — CRWRC of Canada
Burlington, Ont.

Sailors receive goods and Gospel

While most of us look at Christmas as a time to be with family and friends, merchant seamen across the world often spend those days at sea, far away from anyone but their 20 or so fellow crew members.

But, every year, through the Christian Reformed Ministry to Seafarers, thousands of Christmas presents are being distributed to ships that dock in Montreal and Vancouver. During November and December many ships sail away from these ports with a parcel for each officer and crew member safely stored away by the Captain, to be handed out at Christmas time.

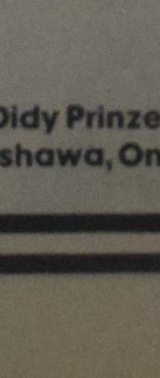
Last year almost two-and-a-half thousand parcels were delivered to ships in the Port of Montreal. When you add to that the figures of Rev. Jeff Dresselhuis in Vancouver and those of his many co-workers on the Canadian and American West Coast, the total comes to close to 6,000. With each parcel goes a brand-new New Testament in the language of the seafarer.

In the Christmas message which the chaplains leave behind on each ship, the seafarers are told that they can expect that someone will pray for them at Christmas time, and that God will always be faithful in His care for them, no matter what time of the year it is.

Chaplain Barend Biesheuvel,
Acting Director
The Seafarers Centre,
Montreal.

Poetry

Christmas Eve



Tell me, Mary, didn't you worry
that night
when the doors Joseph knocked on
remained closed?
Didn't you become anxious
wondering where you could deliver the Child
who was already knocking on your door?

I know I would have been.

I hope I'm not being preposterous;
you were, after all,
the most blessed of women.
But I think you were a lot like me.
Even though you must have worried a little
you knew that God would keep his promise
and fulfil his plan.

That's why I feel so close to you tonight.

Didy Prinzen
Oshawa, Ont.

News digest

Marian Van Til, editor

Toronto police learn to deal with elder abuse

TORONTO (MTP) — Toronto Metro police will be receiving a manual focusing on crime and abuse against the elderly in the fall of 1992, thanks to the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, a new non-profit organization dedicated to preventing elder abuse and neglect. The manual is in part a response to a 1990 national survey on elder abuse, in which one out of 25 seniors reported they had been abused.

Police are also concerned because of another statistic: in Toronto, the number of elderly victims of criminal acts increased 30 per cent between 1986 and 1990.

1.6 million raised this year in MCC thrift shops

WINNIPEG, Man. (MCC) — A few dollars for one item, a few cents for another — bit by bit the sale of used clothing, furniture and small appliances at Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) thrift stores across Canada in 1991 added up to over $1.6 million for relief and development work around the world.

The figure includes a record $646,000 raised at 13 stores in Manitoba, where 2,570 volunteers contributed time repairing or selling items last year.

The MCC thrift shop movement was started in 1974 in response to declining requests for used clothing overseas. The stores offer quality used goods to lower income families in cities and towns from B.C. to Ontario.

Scanner lets doctors see disease signs 20 years early

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Doctors may be able to tell 20 years before it hits whether you're going to suffer from heart disease, thanks to an ultra-quick X-ray machine called a CT scanner. The scanner is capable of taking extremely clear pictures of moving organs, and can detect minute traces of calcium build-up in the cells that line the coronary arteries, the blood vessels which lead to the heart.

Such calcium build-up is the first sign of clogged arteries, the major cause of heart attacks. Doctors say the CT scanner will undoubtedly be used routinely in the future for early detection of heart disease. They also hope it will convince those at high-risk to change their lifestyles.

Music/Media

Joni Mitchell: *Night Ride Home*

Christian themes prominent on new album

Joni Mitchell: *Night Ride Home*
1991 Geffen Records
(Distributed by Columbia House)

Bill Fledderus

Night Ride Home, Joni Mitchell's 16th album, is an intelligent, heart-warming gem, and a testimony to the depth and enduring nature of her talent. Some artists run out of steam or lose their freshness, but Mitchell (who first came on the scene as a folk singer in the late 1960s) seems to get better with age.

The new album exhibits Mitchell's photography on the cover as well as her talents as poet, songwriter, instrumentalist (she plays oboe), and unique vocal stylist. The recording features appearances by master percussionist Alex Acuña, Hamilton guitarist Bill Dillon and singer David Baerwald.

Christian themes are prominent in Mitchell's new songs. One of the strongest tracks is "Slouching towards Bethlehem," a brooding, apocalyptic piece based on a poem by W.B. Yeats. "Passion Play," a song brimming with imagery from the biblical stories of Mary Magdalene, Zacchaeus, the Sermon on the Mount and the Crucifixion, yearns for the time "when all the slaves are free."

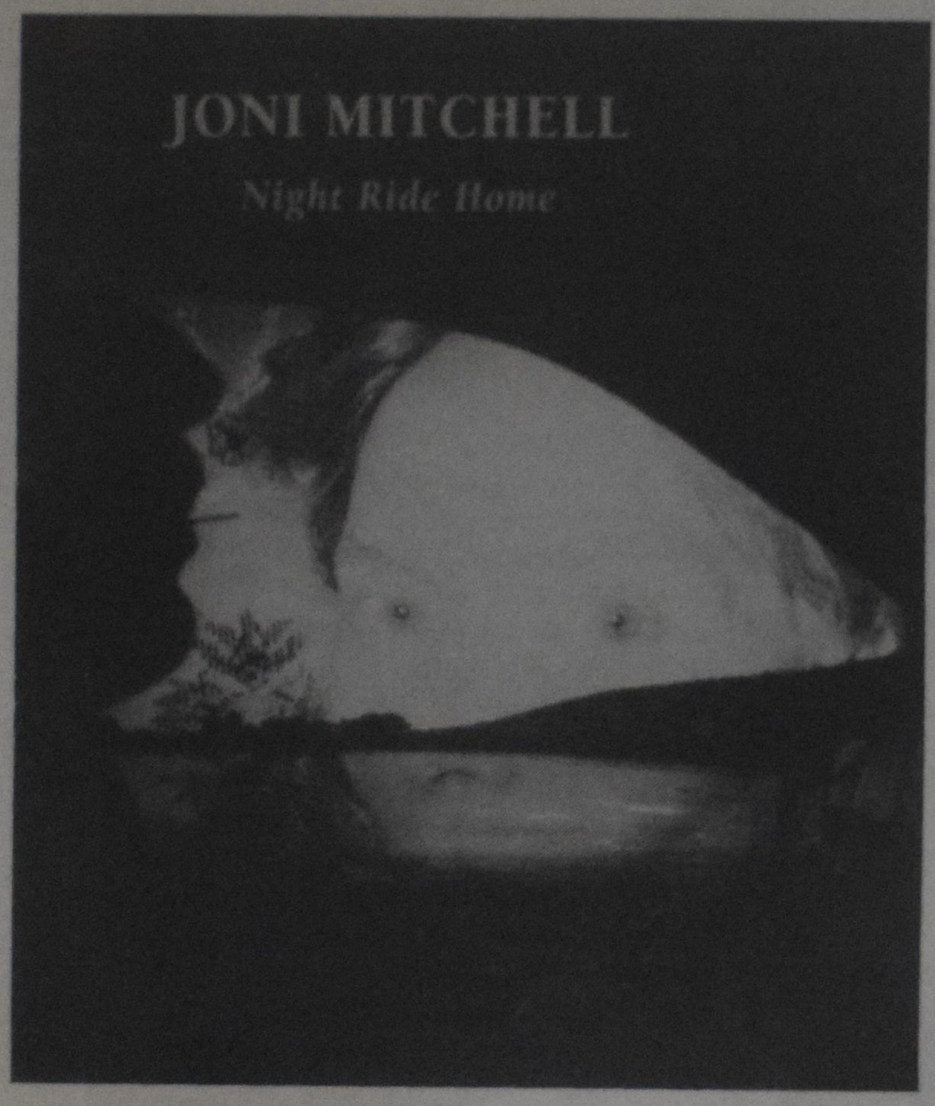
Three songs seem based in part on memories from Mitchell's youth. "Come in from the Cold" is a plea for compassion that opens with the humourous lines:

Way back in 1957, we had to
dance a foot apart,
And they hawk-eyed us from
the sidelines
Holding their rulers without
a heart.

Social criticism

"Ray's Dad's Cadillac" remembers a car with pink fins. "Cherokee Louise" reminisces about a childhood friend who lived with racism and abuse. All are evocative, bittersweet and compassionate.

Two other songs illustrate the breadth of Mitchell's vision. "The Windfall" is a strong critique of materialism, with a chorus that accuses, "You want too much, you want too badly, you want everything for nothing." On the other hand, "Night Ride Home" expresses a joy and contentment experienced driving at night with a loved one.



Mitchell was born Joan Anderson, the daughter of a grocer and a school teacher. (She took her last name from a short-lived marriage to folk singer Chuck Mitchell). When the Alberta College of Art proved uninspiring, Mitchell became a folk singer, and by the late 60s some of her songs had already become hippie anthems.

Her 1971 album *Blue* established her as one of the era's most influential singer-songwriters, ranking her with artists like Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen.

Mitchell has incorporated pop, jazz and rock elements on various albums since then, but has always cultivated a style that is distinctly her own, thanks to her unique voice and characteristically poetic singing style.

Mitchell has roots in Saskatoon, though at present she lives in Los Angeles with her husband, bassist Larry Klein.

Mennonite Brethren-produced Christian rock show to be broadcast around the world

WINNIPEG, Man. (MBC) — "Spin 180," a Christian rock music program produced by the Manitoba Mennonite Brethren Church-owned MB Communications, will go international in January.

The hour-long weekly program has been picked up by the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Network, which reaches 1.9 million service personnel in 25 countries and the high seas.

The program will also be heard by millions of other people in foreign countries who regularly tune in to the English-language network.

The idea of placing the program on the armed forces network was sparked this past summer when a German youth, who was working at MB Communications at the time, told the show's producers that he frequently listened to the network in Germany. "Spin 180" radio host Gerald Fast contacted a chaplain in California and was invited to send demo tapes of the show to the network's board. "Spin 180" was approved for broadcast in early November; the first show will be aired January 5.

"Spin 180" had its debut on Winnipeg's KISS-FM in 1987. Fast, who goes by the name of David Heide on the program, plays Christian rock music by groups such as Petra, White Heart, Stryper and Rez Band. The program is aimed at non-church-going youth and young adults.

Fast is a news reporter and announcer for 1290 Fox, an AM light rock radio station in Winnipeg. He is a member of the Windsor Park Evangelical Free Church.

According to MB Communications Associate Director Victor Neufeld, "Spin 180" generates a large amount of listener response. One radio station manager indicated that there was no other program on his station that generated as many calls or letters. As well, Christian book and record store managers in cities where "Spin 180" has been broadcast frequently report increased sales of Christian rock records and tapes as a result of the show.

"Spin 180" is presently being broadcast in Timmins, Ont., and Thompson, Man. Over 200 installments of the show have been produced, to-date.

MB Communications is owned by the Mennonite Brethren Church of Manitoba. It is best-known for its Russian and German-language radio programming and for *The Third Story*, a children's television show produced between 1976 and 1989 and shown on TV stations across Canada. It also operates Riverton Productions, which exists to promote new Christian artists. Riverton Productions is also a distributor for Canadian children's entertainer Fred Penner.

'Virus' attacks French televangelism system

TOULON (WEF) — A futuristic computer-based evangelistic endeavor sponsored by the French Evangelical Alliance (AEF), was temporarily rendered inoperable in mid-September. The corrupting of software appeared to be the work of computer "hackers" antagonistic to the Gospel witness who gained access to the system's mainframe computer here via modem. The superstitious connotations of the break-in date — Friday the thirteenth — may have been more than coincidental.

The counselling-witnessing service, known as Alpha 7, is tied in to a French telephone system innovation: minitel. The telephone authority distributes small specialized computers without charge to telephone subscribers. They can then interact with any groups operating minitel programs by dialing the program and typing messages in on the keyboard. Replies appear on the screen. The special appeal of minitel to inquirers about Christian faith is that they can dialogue with believers and yet remain anonymous.

Rev. Jacob Holland, the pastor of the Evangelical Free Church of Lamastre, who co-ordinates the Alpha 7 program, reports that it took two intensive days of programming work to repair the damage and restore operation.

Alpha 7 was launched by AEF in 1989 and operated for two years. It was briefly halted, resuming earlier this year with a company here. Recently, after widespread advertising, it had begun to handle heavy user traffic.

Comfortable for the inquirer

The system allows the caller several options. First of all, he or she can scan an index and bring up a prepared reading text on any of a variety of topics handled from a Christian perspective. Second, it allows the caller to keyboard a question and leave it in an electronic mailbox for a later answer. Third, at selected times (Friday evenings from ten o'clock until midnight) the caller can enter into immediate dialogue with a team of counsellors. Currently there are three teams of five or six each — two operating from Toulon and one from Lamastre. Projections call for expanding to three evenings a week and to nine teams each evening — extending coverage to the Paris area, Alsace, and beyond.

Jean-Mark Lepillez, who is president of the AEF evangelical department of communications, points out that this unique method of evangelism will soon be possible elsewhere. With the commercial unification of the European Economic Community next year, its other six nations' telephones can also be served. Other nations are likely to develop comparable systems over the next decade.

Lepillez says that the effort to sabotage the witness of Alpha 7 would appear to be satanically inspired, but comes as a backhanded tribute to the growing effectiveness of this outreach.

Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Crackdown on Chinese Christians by government officials reported

HONG KONG (EP) — The Chinese government has begun a nationwide crackdown on Chinese Christians, according to reports from various news agencies and Christian organizations working in nearby countries.

The Chinese government hopes to "eliminate all religious activities in this communist country," according to a news report from Gospel for Asia (GFA), which supports 18 native Chinese missionaries "who are working covertly in mainland China." GFA's mission leader in Hong Kong reported that among China's 1.3 billion people, there are 70 million Christians. Missionaries who have travelled to Hong Kong report large-scale arrests of believers in the provinces of Zhejiang, Anhui and Jiangsu, and the cities of Guangzhou, Shanghai and Shenzhen since the end of summer.

At present, China has 19 million prisoners that are either in prison or in labor camps, according to GFA. "It is very common to see people disappear and be executed for even very small offenses without a proper trial. There have been a few major arrests of underground church pastors and leaders in Anhui and Henan provinces where there is much revival among the underground church. Pastor Samuel Lam, the leader of a fast-growing church in Gaungzhou, said police have begun to pressure the 1,000 believers who worship at his house church. He said police are warning people not to come to his house."

Religious 'invasion'

Premier Li Peng charged Nov. 8 that there has been an "invasion" of religious forces from outside the country.

The *Legal Daily* reported that Communist Party politburo member Quao Shi told top security officials that "with regard to reactionary religious forces and secret society forces from outside our borders, we must resolutely fight them once they are discovered. We must absolutely not allow their existence or development."

"Following the collapse of the Soviet Communist Party, strict ideological control has become China's long-term policy," said Jonathan Chao, director of the Hong Kong-based Chinese Church Research Centre. "Religions, in particular those brought in from the West, have inevitably been reaffirmed as a means of 'peaceful evolution' through which neo-imperialists try to turn China capitalist."

Immediately following the failed Soviet coup, Chinese leaders made the fight against "peaceful evolution toward capitalism" the nation's top priority. In the ensuing three months, a massive information campaign has called for "more class struggle" to intensify Marxist education, according to *Baptist Press*, and commanded leaders of work units to warn their employees not to meet with foreigners without permission.

Observers say new CIA chief Robert Gates hurt foreigners working in China when he told U.S. senators during recent confirmation hearings that "more can be done [in China] through expanded human intelligence collection." His comment received little attention in the U.S. media, but was reported throughout China. Some communist hard-liners view Gates' statement as proof that the U.S. wants to topple China's government.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's recent trip to China was to establish better relations with China, but "very little was done in the area of basic human rights and freedom of worship," according to GFA. "Chinese leaders in China are appealing for prayer from God's people all around the world for the protection and safety of the Chinese believers. Many are already imprisoned and suffering and many could soon be facing imprisonment or even execution."

U.S. Catholic bishops reject eliminating holy days, warn of increasing secularism

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP) — A plan to drop four of the Roman Catholic Church's six "holy days of obligation" was rejected by U.S. Bishops after a heated debate over the increasingly secular North American lifestyle. A similar plan failed in 1983.

A majority of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops voted to move Ascension Thursday to a Sunday and to eliminate the Jan. 1 holy day honoring Mary, but the vote fell short of the two-thirds majority needed for the changes.

Proponents of the plan to reduce holy days were unable to gain even a majority to drop All Saints Day (nov. 1), or the solemnity of the Assumption (Aug. 15), despite their argument that 14 million regular churchgoers already ignore the church requirement that they attend mass on these holy days.

The bishops did not vote on Christmas or the Immaculate Conception (Dec. 8). Under the proposal, Catholics would still have been obliged to attend Mass each Sunday and on the two remaining holy days.

Bishop Michael Kenny of Alaska said, "People are not taking the obligation seriously." But other bishops argued that reducing the number of holy days would send a message of capitulation to the nation's increasing secularism.

Bishops also rejected a proposal that would have allowed laypersons with "special expertise" to preach in church when an ordained minister was unavailable.

Bishops approved a document on children, urging government and private employers to lend additional support to both traditional and non-traditional families. The bishops pledged their support for family and medical leave, broadened child care, an increased minimum wage and welfare reform to aid families. "While others are campaigning for public office, let us campaign for children," they said.

Bishops also passed their first substantive statement on the environment, challenging Catholics to think of environmental problems in terms of how they affect people, particularly the poor. The bishops blamed U.S. consumption of natural resources and other developed nations for ecological problems. "Americans are the road hogs on the road of life," said Cincinnati Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk, conference president. The bishops asked church members to examine "lifestyles, behaviours and policies, to see how we contribute to the destruction or neglect of the environment."

Telkwa church remembers 40 years of God's faithfulness

Curt Gesch

TELKWA, B.C. — They used to call it "the Dutch church." And perhaps it was that in the beginning. But if the 40th anniversary celebration of the Telkwa Christian Reformed Church proved anything it was that the local congregation has become an integral part of its Telkwa-Bulkley Valley community.

The celebration, held Friday, Nov. 15, in the church auditorium, featured reminiscences, spiritual ponderings, special musical numbers and many expressions of thankfulness.

The Telkwa CRC, which began not long after World War II has come a long way in 40 years, suggested Ralph Huisman, the first member of the congregation to arrive in Telkwa back in 1949. Huisman and his wife, Betty, rented the United Church basement for living quarters in those days. And when more immigrants of the Reformed persuasion began having worship services in that building, strange things sometimes happened.

According to Betty Huisman, she carefully scoured her pie pans each Saturday for use as collection plates on Sunday morning. On a certain Sunday she discovered to her dismay that she had neglected her Saturday duty: the pans were full of pie! So while the organist improvised a longer offertory, she removed her pies, scoured the pans, and eventually the offering was received.

Active, on-going ministry

Besides regular worship services, the Telkwa CRC of 1991 sponsors Bible studies for all ages (including Coffee Break and Men's Life), Calvinettes and Cadets for Telkwa children, and a marriage enrichment course. The congregation also supports Christian social endeavours like a Christian elementary and secondary school, Christian colleges and the ICS, the Christian Labour Association of Canada, and public Christian advocacy groups such as the CPJ. The congregation helps sponsor its own members — Dave and Dianne Hornor — as missionaries and Bible translators in Papua New Guinea.

But if the congregation began as a group of Christians united by an ethnically-based culture, things have certainly changed. "Imports" now part-and-parcel of the congregation include Jim Mackay, who commented, "Forty years of CRC history....I wasn't even born 40 years ago. It seem ironic that a person with a membership of less than a year would be asked to add his input."

And concerning the ethnic mixture of the church, MacKay continued, "Boy, God does strange things — sending a bad-tempered Scotsman and a 'Heinz 57.' Imagine me, working for God and his people and singing my Bob Dylan imitations."

Perhaps the changes that have occurred in the life of the Telkwa congregation can best be exemplified by the words of two of the church's members. Ralph Huisman, the "first one here," said (in English, not Dutch) "I love all you people."

And Chhouim Sak, a church member who lived through the horrors of the Pol Pot regime in Kampuchea, sang the words of Jesus — "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" — without accompaniment...in the Cambodian language.

Forty years of joy, sorrow, steadfastness and change were remembered in a small church in a small town on Nov. 15.

"Forty years of God's faithfulness" were celebrated, concluded John Boonstra, co-ordinator of the celebration.

The human story cannot be understood, it seems, without the divine.

Season's Greetings

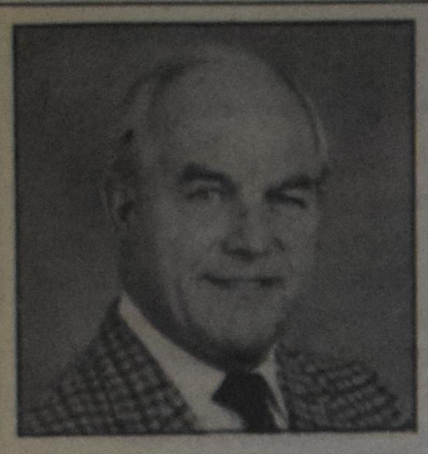
Group breaks off from Wellandport, Ont., CRC

Marian Van Til

WELLANDPORT, Ont. — A 60 per cent majority of the Riverside Christian Reformed Church in Wellandport, Ont., led by their minister, Rev. Joghinda Gangar, voted December 1 to break away from the rest of the congregation and from the Christian Reformed Church.

Reasons given were similar to those of the segments which left Trinity CRC, St. Catharines, Ont., First CRC, Lethbridge, Alta., and several other dissenting groups. Those reasons include dissatisfaction with the denomination's move toward allowing women to be ordained to all church offices, and with the church's perceived unorthodox view of Creation.

Though they are the minority, the 40 per cent who will remain as the Riverside CRC will be allowed to keep the church building. The break-away group will, for the time being, share the building with the Riverside congregation, which is now without a pastor. Each group will conduct its own services and activities.



Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Evangelicalism and the Reformed faith

Reformation Day 1991 gave the editor of **Clarion** *(Canadian Reformed) the inspiration to write an editorial on the subject: "Reformed or evangelical?" Apparently members of Canadian Reformed Churches (as in other churches) skip a service in their home church from time to time "in order to visit an evangelical assembly of one kind or another." That leads to the question: What is the difference between Reformed and evangelical? Professor Geertsema concludes his answer with the following paragraphs:*

"Is there a difference between being Reformed and evangelical? There certainly is! The term evangelical sounds warm and inviting. Undoubtedly many of us have met and interacted with evangelicals and been impressed with their sincerety and faith. I do not wish to call any of this into question. That too is the work of the Lord who sends his Spirit where he wills.

However, when we compare evangelicalism and the Reformed faith it must be affirmed that evangelicalism lacks the depth of the Scriptures and of the Reformed faith. One who was Reformed and becomes evangelical is regressing. Both the Reformed faith and evangelicalism desire to be true to Scripture alone; but the gift of God in the Reformed faith is that it also confesses that we must be true to *all* of Scripture. The entire Word must be studied and the consequences applied to life.

"Evangelicals are presenting a challenge to Reformed believers. Scripture enjoins us to be watchful (I Cor. 16: 13), and also not to quench the Holy Spirit (I Thess. 5: 19). If members of our families and congregations are attracted to the joy in the Lord and zeal for Christ in evangelical circles, we must speak with them in love, appealing to them not to leave in view of the weaknesses of evangelicalism.

"But we must also ask ourselves, 'What is wrong with us? Do they not find this happiness in our midst?' The phenomenon of the continuing attraction of evangelicals for Reformed believers is reason for reflection, concern and self-examination. It is also reason for humble prayer to God that we may not only confess to be true church of Christ, but that this identity may be obvious not only to the outsider, but in the first place to the insider! If it is clear to the insider, those without will also notice it.

"In a real sense evangelicals, by attracting Reformed believers into their circles, are issuing a challenge to us, a challenge precisely on the point of our walk with God and the joy of faith. Such a challenge can be seen as opportune. It reminds us that only the Holy Spirit can give us life, the true life with God.

"Let us pray that God has mercy on us and may that life in Christ flourish in our midst. It should not be the result of our half-hearted faith if someone leaves or even thinks of going evangelical. Leaving means abandoning the beauty and depth of the full biblical gospel as articulated in the Reformed faith."

Needed: Christian schools

The September issue of **The Presbyterian Record** *published an article on education in which the conclusion was drawn that "Christians have been left no choice but to set up their own school system." The November issue contained two letters from subscribers who firmly agreed with that conclusion. We quote from both. In the first letter we read:*

"For too long, Presbyterians have trusted in the vestiges of Egerton Ryerson's good intentions, without looking from a Christian perspective at what was actually being practised in the public system. On the other hand, the many Presbyterians who have taught in the system should be commended for their positive influence.

"Despite Leishman's conclusion, I think he was wrong to call for a neo-orthodox Christian school system. We won't find a broad enough philosophical base in neo-orthodoxy to support an educational system, but we will find a sound base if we go to our Reformed roots. And if we investigate our Reformed heritage, we will find that some 'faithful, reasonable, evangelical Protestants' already have a school system which would welcome Presbyterians. These schools are part of Christian Schools International. In Ontario they are grouped under the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools with its headquarters in Ancaster, Ontario.

"Leishman was right: it's time Presbyterians worked for a Christian school system. But let's work together with our other Reformed brothers and sisters."

And in the second letter we read:

"Thanks for Rory Leishman's call for Christian schools. I appreciated his insight that we are living in a post-Christian era, and that we cannot depend on public schools 'to inculcate...an appreciation for sound moral values.' I also appreciated his mentioning that there are many virtuous teachers in the public schools. There are, in fact, many committed Christian teachers in the public schools. I believe they have a calling and a mission here.

"At the same time, when we eliminate Christianity from our schools we are opening them to some other religious position. Some have called it liberal humanism while others speak of neo-paganism. That is why I support Rory Leishman's call for Christian schools. We should face the 'religious' nature of all education and realize that our choice is not whether to have 'religious' education, but which religion we want to shape our children's lives.

I would like to see 'faithful, reasonable, evangelical Protestants' *planning* to work together to openly operate Christian schools in which we confess our faith to our children and hope that they freely choose to stand in (and reform) our biblical tradition."

Is there a cure for violence?

Violence against women has been (and is) a much debated issue, especially since the Clarence Thomas - Anita Hill controversy in Washington. The **Christian Week** *of Nov. 5 asks: Can the violence against women be stopped? It quotes some of the statistics that show how many women suffer abuse at the hands of men. Yet other things must be said too.*

"There are several elements that are troubling. One is that little is said about healthy families — where fathers and mothers live in supportive relationship to one another — as a basis for countering violence against women.

"It is troubling as well, that while violence against women as the normally weaker partners is easy for opinion leaders in society to identify, there is far less of an inclination to recognize that abortion too is a form of violence by the stronger against the weaker, in this case by women against the children in their own wombs.

"I find it troubling too that the leading edge of complaint about the violence against women seems to come from women who are themselves filled with anger — in this case against men. Where will we find answers if we end up simply fuelling even greater anger between the sexe.?

"I believe that the answer to the violence of men against women must grow out of a rebirth of love and respect in the hearts of men and women for one another. Both sides are capable of anger. We have many walking wounded in our society who are capable of doing terrible things to one another — and because men have the physical strength and power in most cases, they do by far the greatest amount of damage.

"We will not be helped if either men or women treat this issue as one that can be resolved by punishment, or legislation, or stigmatizing, or even campaign of public education.

"We need a rebirth of love and readiness to accept one another as persons. Such readiness involves respect for one another and openness to what persons of the opposite sex have to contribute.

"The Bible has much to teach us about respect and mutual submission. Where men and women learn to treat one another in such a spirit, violence against women will be out of the question. Read Ephesians 5 and see for yourself."

Jacob Kuntz is pastor-emeritus of First Christian Reformed Church, Kitchener, Ont.

Must Quebec leave Canada?

The **Catholic New Times** *of Nov. 17 published an editorial on the subject: "Is Canada bad for Quebec?" Can Quebec keep its language and culture intact only if it separates from Canada? Or can Quebec keep its own identity as a "distinct society" within the Canadian federation? The editor is not so sure that separation is a necessity for Quebec's cultural survival. But there has to be tolerance both from Quebec and from the other provinces of Canada. We quote the last part of the article:*

"The fact is: Quebec and the other communities of Canada need each other's support — culturally, economically and politically — if we are to have a realistic chance of preserving the best of what has been Canada in this northern home we still share.

"Either Canadians generally will cherish Quebec and its culture and willingly bestow generous safeguards upon it, or Quebec will separate — and in that we will all be diminished.

By the same token, either Quebecers will put real energy into the give and take of working towards a secure future for their cultural aspirations within Canada, or the constitutional debate will limp further into a dead end. Canadians outside Quebec will experience Quebec's positions as ultimatums, and will refuse to be pushed. That will add fuel to separatist fires and we will all be diminished.

"At this moment of crisis, let there be no rolling of the dice. Let there be no childish resentments. The stakes are high. Our children's children will hold us all accountable for how we conduct ourselves — Quebecers and non-Quebecers alike."

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Features

Let's hear it for peppermint Christianity

Bert Witvoet

The lonely peppermint has had a rough ride in recent years as critic after critic of Reformed worship practices has pointed to the eating peppermints in church at the onset of the sermon as either a silly habit or a nasty addiction. The idea that at a given time during the worship service (liturgically determined by the closing of the pulpit Bible and a little cough from the minister in preparation for his first line "Dearly beloved" or "Brothers and Sisters") a hundred or so people should reach for their handbag or pocket and produce a roll or bag of peppermints to be distributed to immediate members of the family and a few neighbouring unminted souls seems entirely out of keeping with the spiritual import of the moment.

Ancient tradition

Critics have called the peppermint a kind of "opium" that allows the congregation to settle back and allow the most fiery sermon to wash over them without the least bit of damage. But that accusation has been dismissed by several theologians of high repute. The latter have pointed out that the Israelites of old used to tithe mint as part of their religious obligations, providing therewith the Old Testament foundation for the New Testament eating of mint. The Pharisees were, of course, condemned for relying on this tithing of mint to the exclusion of seeking judgment (not to be confused with "judgmint"), mercy and faith. But peppermints have never been idolized that way in the Reformed tradition, say such doctrinal stalwarts as Berkhof and Bonnhoffer.

There is, unfortunately, no reference to "pepper" in either the Old or the New Testament to give orthodox standing to the pungent taste of peppermint. But according to a hitherto unknown doctrinal standard from the 17th century called *The Amsterdam Confession of the Rotterdam Faith*, it is permissible to base the practice of mixing pepper with mint on frequent references in the Bible to "salt." The reason given is that many of us have a tendency to reach for the saltshaker when it is the peppershaker we want, or vice versa. It was even noted that one minister, by mistake, once preached on the text "You are the pepper of the earth."

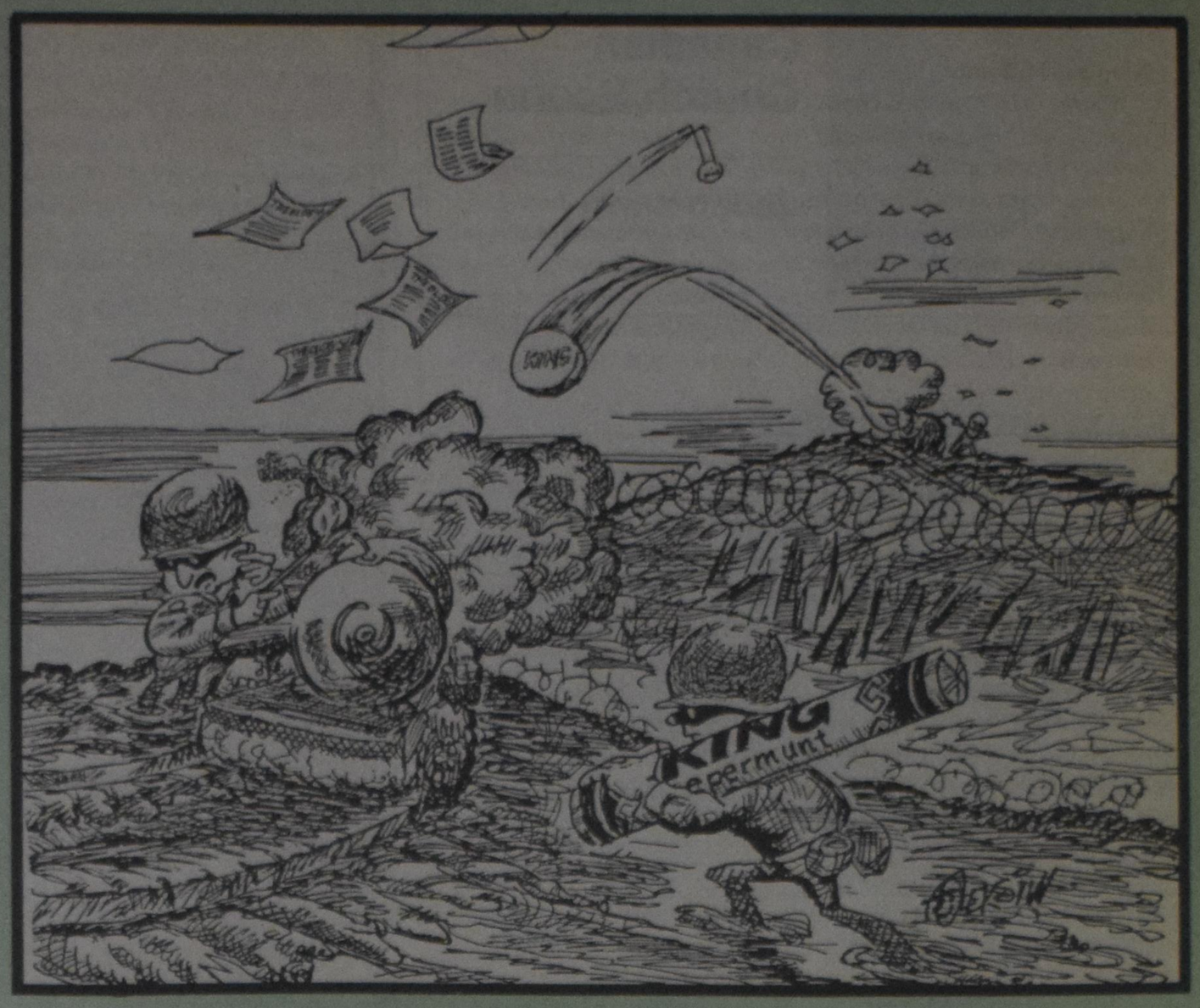
It is true, some Reformed adherents of the mint have defended the little white tablet a little too much, calling it a bonding mechanism or "a covenantal pebble." They see the ritual act of peppermint eating as a powerful tool to unite an auditorium full of hitherto disconnected individuals. They remind skeptics that without so much as a signal from anyone, hands quietly move to mouths, linger for a moment and then return to the safety of skirted or trousered laps. Such a wave of graceful actions washing over row upon row of anticipating saints almost attains the status of a mystical experience, say fanatical proponents.

Reformed sleight of hand

But no lesser scholar than Karl Barth has argued against that contention. A significant ritual act has to be performed with more boldness! he exclaims in one of nine volumes entitled *Kirchliche Dogmatik*. He describes the peppermint highlight of the sermon this way:

For a few minutes the owner of the hands keeps his or her jaws firmly in place, not wanting to betray the fact that a transaction took place (and that on the sabbath day!) between the hand and the mouth. The intent is to give the impression that the hand just moves up to touch the lips to see if they are still there. But watch the mouths a few minutes later. Quietly the muscles start to work the jaws. The most active muscle, the tongue, is unseen, of course, but one knows from experience that it is actively moving the little pebble from one side of the mouth to the other (a rolling peppermint gathers no floss). Once in a while the Adam's apple (more correctly called the Eve's apple, which, according to legend, got stuck in Adam's throat) sinks and rises to alert the observer to the fact that a rush of flavoured saliva is headed for the inner sanctum of the body comfortably resting under the onslaught of a fire-and-brimstone sermon. All of it is done so secretly and is surrounded with so much hypocrisy that one must refute the argument that it is a religious ceremony.

Thus far Karl Barth. At this time let me just add the following observation: If the joint eating of peppermints were a religious ritual, it should produce harmony and peace. So far it cannot be demonstrated to anyone's satisfaction that it has prevented Reformed churches from splitting up.



Should peppermints not bring the unity required for an effective ministry in the world, they can always be stuffed into the Canons of Dort *and used for ammunition against those who differ with you on what the sermon was about.*

No, the truth about the peppermint lies somewhere between the status of opium and ecstasy. Somewhere between a nasty habit and a third sacrament. Scientists have come to our aid in determing the true value of eating a peppermint just before the preaching of the Word.

Increased concentration

According to a recent news item, William Dember, a professor of psychology at the University of Cincinnati, has conducted a study of the impact of the scent of peppermint on people required to do "sustained vigilance tasks." What did he find? That the mere smell of peppermint increased attentiveness and concentration by 15 per cent! The smell of lily of the valley has the same effect, but that lies beyond the scope of this article. Reformed people are not known for consuming large quantities of lilies of the valley. If the mere *smell* of peppermints can increase concentration, think what the smell *and taste* can do! It appears, then, that Reformed people have been entirely correct in maintaining the custom of eating peppermints at the beginning of the sermon. This habit only confirms the high place accorded to preaching in Reformed churches. Preaching is so important to Reformed people that they will gladly make themselves look foolish in the eyes of non-peppermint Christians by surreptitiously sliding a little white attention-stimulant into their Word-hungry mouths.

Let modesty prevail

This is not the time to be proud, of course. We must in all humility accept the findings of science and resist the temptation of saying to other Christians, "I told you so." Instead, let us steadfastly maintain our present practice of eating peppermints and even insert it into all missionary activities throughout the world... with only one minor alteration.

Keeping in mind the critical remarks made by Karl Barth, let us, instead of stealthily shoving a peppermint into our face, throw it up in the air joyfully and catch it with our mouths as it comes tumbling down in all its glorious splendour. The added bonus of instituting such a dramatic act will be that the scent of mint will permeate the auditorium and assure that all potential sleepers will stay awake.

And perhaps, by thus boldly incorporating the act of eating a peppermint into the liturgy, it can attain the status of religious ritual.

Bert Witvoet has been chewing peppermints in church ever since he knew the difference between them and the buttons on his dad's shirt.

An act of love

Truus Heemskerk

I would like to share with you a simple and true story that happened in our Christian Reformed Church in Welland, Ont., one Sunday morning.

When we were getting ready to go to church (my husband, our children and myself) I thought to myself, "Have I forgotten anything? The budget envelope, money for the collections, kleenex, and, oh yes, let me not forget the peppermints." It's a tradition with us to take peppermints along — one for each of us and one for the person beside us, to be eaten when the sermon starts.

It suddenly struck me that I had forgotten to buy them yesterday. "Sorry people," I said, "no peppermints this time."

"As long as I am not sitting next to a little child," I thought, "I'll be all right." Sharing a peppermint with someone beside you can bring a smile or friendly contact, especially when that someone is a child. It's not the peppermint as such. There's more to it. Whether you are five or 80 years old or in between, everyone likes an act of kindness. But this one Sunday I could not show this act of kindness. "For this one time it won't do any harm," I thought.

The church was full when we arrived. The only place left open was beside another family. I ended up sitting next to a little boy. When the time came to share a peppermint, I had nothing for my little friend.

Lasting impression

The minister preached a great sermon about the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, though. He explained what Jesus does for us in our daily work and at home. "With Christ we can do everything," he said.

It seemed that the sermon

Should Christian schools go back to the basics? Part 1

Nicolaas H. Buma

Shares in that precious asset called time have escalated in value — only because the asset is scarce. And the scarcity of any resource speculatively fuels its value. We engage in time studies so we can "maximize" profitability, by minimizing time. One hand on the wheel, the other cradling a cellular telephone — the picture represents the '90s. We're a nation in a hurry! Microwaves, dishwashers, computers, cellular telephones, instant banking...all products of an ingenious, omnipresent microchip. All there to save time, which in the process of saving... we lost!

Photo: Living and Learning

"You brought your own peanut-butter/banana sandwich and the only thing you ever bought was milk. Leisure time involved others rather than things. We didn't have designer jeans or Vuarnet shirts, and keeping your hair down meant gobs of greasy Brylcream."

In 1965 it was predicted that by 1985 the average American would be working 22 hours per week. Technology would make that possible. But by 1990 the average American was working 47 hours per week. We've bar-coded, inventoried, computerized our way...out of time. More time equals more gadgets to make more time to make more money to acquire more gadgets...*to make more time!* Its an endless circle.

We ask each other "How are you?" but don't have time to listen, bid each other a "See you" without arranging time for a visit, and tell each other to "Have a good day" without the foggiest notion of what it is we're saying.

And that same frenetic pace has gripped the educational system. *The adult world robs kids of their adolescence!* We force them into making career choices in Grade 9, and with our encouragement they spin their way through as many university prep courses as possible. Its called fast-tracking; a process of acceleration that doesn't give individuals the time to ponder the ground on which they stand.

We're hiding

In that process, we've fragmented our spirituality. We've subjected our spirituality to time! We're so busy doing that we're never *done*. Life is chaos and its players sometimes seem so overwhelming. We wonder whether we're the only sane or insane person left. We lose our bearings and our moorings.

We close our ears to God's call, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3: 8) because we're so desperately hiding in and behind our...*things*. God's "still small voice" his "gentle whisper" (I Kin. 19: 12) is lost in the cacophony of 20th century noise, the kaleidoscope of 20th century sight, noises and visual distractions that invade our senses. We have lost the need to stop and look and listen until somehow we're often *tragically* arrested, forced to bring into focus those basic questions:

Who am I?
Why am I here?
Where am I going?
Is it really worth it?
Does it really matter?

Done in, we muster the last remaining drops of spent energy to answer the call of Matt. 11: 28: "Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." In *that* submission time collapses...and assumes its true identity.

Few choices

I grew up in a simpler world. A world with its own problems, but a world where expectations and responsibilities and authority and relationships were (more or less) defined. A world that still contained a sense of moral order, where sin was still part of the vocabulary.

But by some standards it was an impoverished world, a *technologically* impoverished world — a world without personal computers, communication satellites or moon landings. A world without Mickey D's, KFC or computer arcades. A world of few choices!

Which high school you attended depended on whether you wanted to learn a trade or go to university. Curricular choices were limited. There was no semestering: life was predictable for 10 months, and less concentrated. Our principal was the quintessential diplomat: "Bull," his enforcer. Assault, by teachers, usually a text or pointer, was practised but never prosecuted. I remember walking into Miss Duncanson's Latin class 30 years ago fearing the weight of the Latin grammar text because we didn't know the declensions, and buoyed by the bravado characteristic of youth chanting, "Noter pater, benedicimus ad nos" — loosely translated, "Lord have mercy on us." And that wasn't in jest.

You brought your own peanut-butter/banana sandwich and the only thing you ever bought was milk. Leisure time involved others rather than things. We didn't have designer jeans or Vuarnet shirts, and keeping your hair down meant gobs of greasy Brylcream. There was no medication for zits; they were popped onto bathroom mirrors.

I remember the milkman dropping his bottles at the front door and the horse dropping his load on the street. The only audiovisual I had in elementary school was the bone-chilling screech of white chalk on a black-board.

I remember Young People's where the oldest member was 25 and holding. I remember consistories that promoted Christian education rather than church education.

I heard Old Testament sermons preached in the context of the New, and expected the faithful explication of the *Heidelberger* Sunday evenings.

That doesn't mean my simpler world was all good. Nor should we want it how it used to be. That simply isn't the nature of history in which yesterday is replaced by tomorrow. But life was a whole lot simpler then; we had *more* time to make fewer choices!

Idealism eroded

Life changed as it always does and we changed as we always do. Individualism replaced an earlier sense of social and religious community. Later on we added a healthy dollop of materialism with its attendant consumerism. The world of the '60s in which we found ourselves "promised to transform an authoritarian society ruled by the pursuit of power and money into a beautiful world of communes, compost heaps and life in a perpetually altered state."

And we Reformed people had our Dooyeweerdian thing — modalities and cultural transformation. We were out to redeem society. Where did the idealism of youth take us? The underdeveloped world remains hungry. Poverty and war grind on. Our sense of community, of nationhood, shrivelled. Enrolments in Christian schools peaked, then remained static. Specific forces — each a complex topic in its own right — eroded our earlier sense of youthful idealism.

There is an *electronic carnival*, a circus that bewilders us with a variety of choices, determines what we buy, what fills our leisure moments, what influences our values and formulates our opinions for us. Satellite dishes dot the countryside, guardians and interpreters of heaven-sent messages — at least aerials seemed to have the humility to work in a horizontal mode.

"(And) to keep up with the activities that adolescence as a system prescribes for them, teenagers (have) had to enter the 'adult' preserve of work..." *Dancing in the Dark* (p. 45). *Work* has become a means of acquiring rather than providing. Caught in the same pursuit as their parents, part-time jobs are often perceived on the part of students as parental pressure to save for college — more often the money gained is spent on Vuarnet, Ocean Pacific, Nike Airs, sound equipment, CDs, rock videos, junk food — or just simply piddled away.

Marketing experts have recognized this phenomena and coined the term *Skippies*: school *k*ids with *i*ncome and *p*urchasing *p*ower. In fact, *skippies* rather than *yuppies* have become their focus.

Stress and boredom

"And then there is *the problem of leisure*, a problem that forms a major element of modern cultural confusion: what to do with ourselves when we have the time. And

continued on p. 12....

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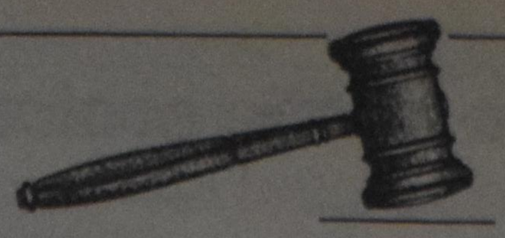
had made an impression on my little friend sitting next to me. All of a sudden he started digging into his pocket. It was a difficult task because there was not much space between us. First, out came his kleenex. Then he tried to get his hand back into his pocket and out came a penny, a nail, a cork and finally a candy. It was sticky and dirty. He picked it clean with his little fingers.

I observed it all. But to my great surprise, instead of putting it in his own mouth he looked at me and said, "It's for you."

I will never forget that moment. His eyes sparkled when I thanked him for it. No matter how dirty the peppermint was, I put it in my mouth. It was delicious to me because it was one of the greatest gifts of love I have ever received.

Truus Heemskerk lives in Fonthill, Ont.

Letters to Sean (3)



Bert Bakker Representing the guilty

Dear Son,

I am glad to hear that the LSAT exam for entrance into law school went well (even though you didn't use the study material and sample tests that I got for you at the local university book store).

In my last letter I made the point (without defending it) that the adversary ethic used to defend the representation of the guilty is an illusion about the relationship between the lawyer and the client. This untruth is tangled up with what is commonly referred to in professional journals of counsellig and practice as "Role Ethics." Let me explain.

We lawyers like to play "the role of being a professional." Our law offices are decorated. We dress up to go to work. Our receptionist, secretary and support staff deal with us and our clients with courtesy and respect. When we appear with a client before a judge in Supreme Court, we wear formal clothing, and over it all, a formal gown. We address the opposing lawyer as "My Friend" or "My Learned Friend." We address the judge as "Your Honour" or "My Lord." In all our actions we want to convey to our clients that we are professionals — which is also what our clients expect of us. All of this can be very good, and creates a respect for the rule of law in Canada. I have no criticism of this conduct except to make the observation that it is easy for us as lawyers to get caught up in our professional role and to forget that we are persons before we were ever lawyers.

Let me illustrate how easy it is to get caught up in the "role," particularly when you are young and inexperienced as a lawyer and feel somewhat insecure. Last week I sat at my desk facing a client who was pouring out to me a long tale of woe about a trusted partner who had cheated him.

I saw myself; I saw my client; and I realized that I had certain expectations about myself in that relationship. I was also aware that my client had certain expectations of me, as a lawyer, in that relationship. I was also aware that his expectations and my expectations clashed. Those clashing expectations caused a tension and I tried to handle the situation by avoiding the tension!

I asked myself, "What would a lawyer do now? — that's a role question. Do I as a lawyer do for my client (within the framework of the Code of Professional Conduct of course), *what he or she wants to be done*, or do I as a lawyer *do for my client what a professional lawyer thinks needs to be done?*

The problem of role ethics is not unique to lawyers. It is part of the doctor's life, the accountant's life and the life of anyone who is working for someone else.

If I as a lawyer do what my client wants me to do, I subject myself as a Christian to my client's values, ethics and morals. But as a Christian I may not do that, for I belong to Christ and I am to submit to his rule. If I do for my client what *I* think needs to be done, my client subjects him- or herself to my values, ethics and morals — which in certain areas may be based on my ignorance and my prejudice, "for we all see through a glass darkly."

If I do, as a lawyer, what my client wants me to do to represent him or her as a guilty person before the court, I can argue that the adversary ethic and the whole legal system requires me to represent him or her: I can argue that the truth will win out in the clash between the wants of my client "to get off" and the government's wants to see my client "convicted according to law." I can further argue that as the client is a consumer of legal services, he or she is entitled to get what he or she asks for and pays for — I am being immoral by paternalistically imposing my ethics and values on my client, right?

If I, as a lawyer, will only do what I think my client needs to have done for him or her (which is a very respected traditional view in the legal profession, particularly among the older lawyers), I can subtlely impose my morals and ethics on my client through the use of my professional authority, and by leaning on my client's insecurity and ignorance about the law.

In fact, many clients are very happy to dump all the ethical responsibilities for "what is to be done" on the lawyer: "Get rid of my wife;" "Put the defaulting mortgagor and family on the street in the heart of winter;" "Close down my competitor's business;" the list could go on. "Don't tell me how you'll do it — just do it! I don't want to know about it, but if things go badly in the end, I can then blame you as my lawyer for the results."

In the first instance, if I do what my client wants me to do, I put my own conscience on hold within the bounds of professional conduct; and that's a delusion. In the second instance, if I give to my client what I think he or she needs to have done for him or her, I pretend that my client is a person whose conscience does not matter.

As you can see in my example when I faced my client in the office with the tale of woe about his partner deceiving him, I should not have run away from the conflict of expectations. Instead I should have dealt with the conflict head on, and had a discussion about values as they are incorporated in the rules of law — my values and my client's values.

At the conclusion of this discussion I would have learned something from my client and my client would have learned something from me. Both of us, it is to be hoped, would have grown as people who want to "see the truth and tell the truth." Also, my client and I would have been able to make an informed decision on whether we both wanted to continue the relationship and "what was to be done about the deceiving partner."

The adversary ethic, used to defend the representation of the guilty in its true and pure form, does not allow for a discussion about morals to take place in the law office. It is supposed to be neutral ground. The lawyer is required to serve the legal system by putting his conscience on hold and presume his client to be innocent until proven guilty. As a Christian lawyer I cannot support this line of thinking. This does not mean, however, that as a Christian lawyer I would not represent the guilty.

Before leaving this discussion on role ethics please read Bolt's Play "A Man for All Seasons," a story about another lawyer, Thomas More, who was asked for advice by Henry VIII on his divorce. Or if you don't have the time to read it, pick up the video of the movie — and let me have your reaction.

The very best.

Love,

Dad.

Bert Bakker is a partner in the Bakker Atamanuk law firm in St. Catharines, Ont.

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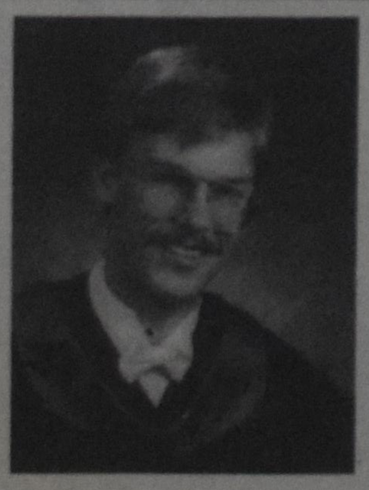

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Should Christian schools go back to the basics? Part 1

....continued from p. 11

consigned as youth are to a special, protracted limbo between infancy and maturity, they suffer acutely the human quests for identity, intimacy and meaning. Very often parents caught in the economic scramble choose to divert their adolescent offspring with the very thing they themselves are after — more leisure toys: cars, stereos, movies, clothes, recordings, or whatever. Neglect instead of nurture only worsens the aimlessness of youth..." *Dancing in the Dark* (p. 253). We live in a tension between stress and boredom.

Today, parents are faced with their own irrelevance. They have become...taxis! Increasingly the holy grail of nurture is abandoned to daycare centres or pre-kindergarten, to arenas of organized sport, to youth pastors who burn themselves out trying to make a difference, to teachers who have lost their effectiveness in a philosophical and religious supermarket, and to youth workers whose initiatives are sometimes stifled by a maze of bureaucratic regulations. Increasingly the voices that nurture, shape and mould are no longer *inter-generational* but *electronic!* And in response..., youth moulds itself!

Life is like McDonalds: "You greet the customer, take the order, punch it into the computer. You then speed to the shake machine weaving through four co-workers headed in different directions, move to the burger bin and sprint to a machine where you grab a bag of fries. Then you bring it all back to the customer — with a smile, in under a minute" *Newsweek Dec. 18, 1989* (p. 47).

Do you sense the tension? Now maybe I'm guilty of overstatement. But you can't deny the fact that some of the lint that surrounds those forces that shape society gets stuck on our Christian clothing. And if it gets stuck on yours and mine, it will get stuck on your kids and my kids for sure! (concluded next week).

Dr. Bunna delivered this speech at the October parent-teacher meeting of the London District Christian Secondary School in London, Ont.

Education

Calvin student teachers in Ontario public schools get rave reviews

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO, Ont. — Good reports are being received by Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., from public schools in Ontario where it has placed students in a new program this year.

The work of Annette Ridder in Queen Victoria School in Hamilton is "absolutely marvelous," says principal Marjorie Landall. "If she's an example of what comes from Calvin College, we're most impressed," she said. Annette has just started teaching full-time in the Dundas Christian School, replacing a teacher who is on pregnancy leave.

Calvin has been accepting some Ontario residents who have not been picked in the lottery to get into one of the province's teacher's colleges. Students who graduate from Calvin's education program and receive the Michigan teaching certificate are then able to receive the Ontario teaching certificate because of reciprocity between Michigan and Ontario. The students may be graduates of Ontario universities, but they spend a year taking education courses at Calvin before doing student teaching.

Students asked for public schools

Normally Calvin's student teachers in Ontario have been placed in Christian schools as part of a co-operative program with Redeemer College. But this year six students have specifically asked for placement in public schools. Calvin hired Mr. William Rang, retired Christian school principal living in Dunnville, to make the arrangements and to represent Calvin in this program in Ontario.

Rang says that the acceptance of the Calvin students by the public schools has been "fantastic." One supervising teacher said that the student Calvin sent has been a "God-send." Rang says that the students bring a good work ethic, make thorough preparations and are enthusiastic.

Student Nelly Hotke says she's been well-accepted in the two Toronto public schools where she's gaining teaching experience. She feels isolated from the other Calvin students but has found other Christian teachers in the schools. She's very grateful that Calvin has made this opportunity available because she is not free to move around to where the jobs may be.

Principal Harry Kiezebrink at the S.A. Cawker Public School in Port Perry says that the student teachers are worked into the classroom gradually. At first they sit in the back observing the dynamics of the classroom, then slowly take part in some of the teaching and lesson planning. About Laura Huizenga, the Calvin student in his school, Kiezebrink says, "We're quite pleased with her. She's doing very well."

Hotke taught her first two months in the Beaches Alternative School which is part of the Kimberly Public School in Toronto. She says there is great involvement of parents helping out in the school, with two or more parents in the school at any given time. Now she is teaching in an inner-city school at St. James Town. The school is extremely structured, with very strict rules. This is felt necessary because the homes in that area are considered to be very unstructured.

Ontario students have been coming to Calvin College for this program because it is very hard to get into teacher education programs in Ontario. There is an over-supply of students seeking admittance, and an over-supply of teachers in general in the province. But the students are optimistic about their changes of getting a teaching position.

This program was initiated at Calvin by Professor Leroy Stegink who responded to the expressed need and is pleased that it is working so well. Many of these students have been out of college for a few years, so they bring maturity and life experience to their teaching, notes Stegink.

The MOST news on the Netherlands and the Dutch in Canada and the USA

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Society/Finance

'No more handouts'

John Valk

We are a society of haves and have nots. The former enjoy the affluence generated by our capitalist system. The latter are the economic underclass, frequently dependent on government support to maintain even their meagre existence.

An underclass is a dependent class. It is people with limited options and opportunities, unable to determine their own future. Government support and lack of creative alternatives keeps many perpetually impoverished.

In the worst of economic times options and alternatives for the powerless decrease. Social programs, even health care, are the first to come under public scrutiny in depressed times. "No more handouts" is the rallying cry from the tax-burdened middle class; "No more tax increases." But that has a hollow ring among the underclass, who distinctly remember that our powerful rulers voted themselves a hefty increase not so long ago.

We are not now in the best of economic times. And things may not get a whole lot better. That puts the underclass at even greater risk, most particularly children, teens and single parents. Few will have sufficient options or alternatives to escape the dependency syndrome.

Even students can become part of this dependency class, though their dependency is of a different sort. It results from the cost of higher education today. It is not at all unusual for graduates to be burdened with a $15,000 to $20,000 debt before they receive their first pay cheque. If any contemplate marriage, with the hope of a family and their own home, one can easily deduce that they will be dependent on their banker and a well paying job for quite some time. Who can blame them for using high salary as the main job criterion, or as new tax payers, who can blame them for voting against new tax increases?

What is needed in this whole circus is not more handouts or more material wealth. Governments can ill afford increased social programs or decreased tuition fees. What is needed are *hand ups* for the disadvantaged, reduced time and cost for the advantaged, and more creative reflection for all of us.

But who will do this? Who will give another a hand up? Who will liberate someone from life-long economic dependency? We ask, "Of what benefit is it to me to give another a hand up? Most likely it will delay the realization of my own individual economic dream. And my happiness is tied to my economic dream — isn't it?"

The wrong dream

Tom Sine, who visited Fredericton last week, stated that we have been sold the wrong dream. Our happiness and security do not lie in the accumulation of individual wealth, material goods or individual power and control. They lie, rather, in the people around us — in community. Foremost, they lie in God. We have learned the wrong meaning of peace, security and happiness.

To focus on people does not mean depriving ourselves of basic comforts and amenities. But let's ensure that all people have them. We need to invest in *people*, not merely in their money or labour. That requires a community of people willing to give others in need a hand up, not a handout.

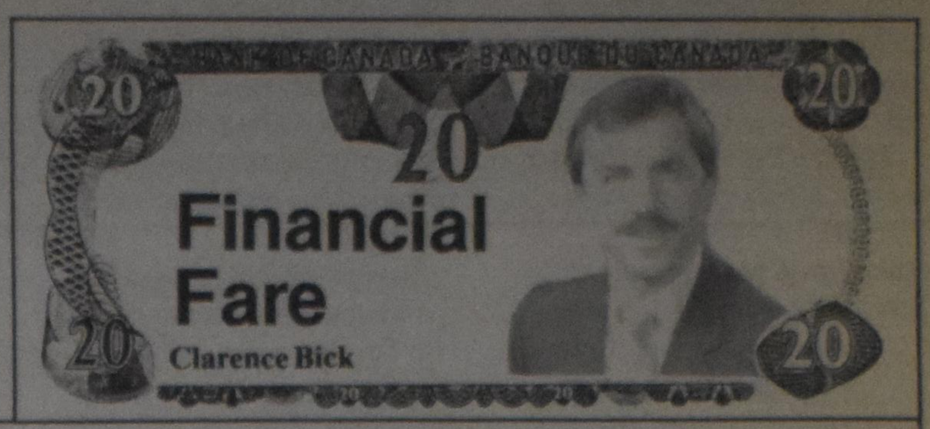
Imagine, for example, if a community of people liberated one of its students from his or her university debt upon graduation. This debt-free student in turn would be free to seek a job not with a focus on his or her own personal financial gains, but one which would give a hand up to others who were disadvantaged. What such a job might entail would be limited only by one's own imagination and creativity.

A rare community?

What kind of community would offer such an opportunity to a student? Certainly one in which considerable trust had developed. It would be one concerned with reducing the costs of living rather than continued economic growth and material prosperity. It would be one with common rather than individual goals, with a world-and-life view oriented toward "the other." It would be a community of love and devotion seeking to empower others, especially disadvantaged women and children. The ultimate struggle of the community would be to become true imagebearers of God.

Such a view is radically different than our present outlook. A rampant individualism, a competition and struggle for power and control, tends to shape our lives at present. It certainly undergirds our society and is even taught to our children.

John Valk is a Christian Reformed chaplain at the University of New Brunswick, Fredericton.



Stewardship

This column was originally intended to be a short technical discussion about spending money and how to get the most value out of every dollar. However, focusing only on the technical aspect could leave the impression that one's sole concern is the self-centred issue of "how to get the most bang for your buck."

It became apparent that to be complete, this discussion would have to include reference to stewardship. My job is financial planning, which means evaluating income and assets and then applying a knowledge of investments and taxes to make income and assets work more efficiently.

What is interesting about money and working with money is that it can be an emotional topic. Many people expect me to be an expert on "stewardship" but the same standard is not often applied, for example, to a carpenter. He (or she) is expected to use time and materials judiciously when building something. While he may be highly qualified to build a gorgeous mansion, like me he may feel he is not the best qualified to comment on whether the owners of the house were being stewardly in the use of their money.

What I will do, though, is pass on what I hope are thought-provoking examples about how we have to be careful in thinking about and making judgements on stewardship.

Care with resources

Why is it important to make every dollar stretch? There is the simple reality that financial resources are limited and we are expected to maximize the value of these assets through management. God worked through King David, for example, when David began setting aside resources so that Solomon could build the temple. Saving for the future is one aspect of money management.

There is a reasonable argument that financial management is more important for Christians than others. As Christians we have an obligation to share our material blessings. If we simply tithe, then we will have to be 11 per cent more efficient with the remaining 90 per cent of income to stay even. (Some hold the view that material blessings from God will increase because we tithe, but that discussion will be left alone here.)

What exactly is stewardship? While I think I understand the concept I have not yet seen nor am I able to create a definition that I think properly captures its essence. A starting point is our Reformed heritage which tells us that our faith is not something to be applied on Sunday mornings but affects all aspects of our life. In money management, stewardship is not tithing or charitable giving but using 100 per cent of our money properly.

However, that "proper use" can be the problem — and can become very subjective. Extravagence for one is prudence for another, and there is danger in making judgments of others based on our own attitudes. Let me give an example.

A few years ago I cycled a lot and purchased a new bicycle at a price higher than most people would want to spend. But if most people were to compare the hours my bike is used with the amount of time they use the dust-covered $50 clunker in their own garages, the cost of my bike per hour of use is far lower than theirs. In my mind, the expenditure was reasonable.

I visited a friend one Saturday evening who suggested to me that this bike purchase was rather extravagant. Earlier that afternoon I had gone on a two-hour bike ride. Ironically, my friend had spent the afternoon watching the *Tour de France* bike race on television. I pointed out that the combined cost of my television and bicycle was less than what he had paid for his television. We subsequently agreed that "extravagant" is a subjective notion.

On the flip side, people have told me that my bike is a relatively more stewardly use of money than an expensive television; bicycling, after all, provides exercise while television is a useless waste of time. Again, I think that personal biases and values are confusing stewardship with other issues like morality and responsibility.

The health benefits of exercise can be achieved in three 20-minute sessions per week. I am no healthier for riding an expensive bike than a cheap one, so is the better bike more stewardly?

If a person exercises 10 hours a week at the cost of enough time for his or her family, then in my opinion a wrong choice in the use of time has been made. Whether the time is spent exercising or watching television is irrelevant. And whether the bike is high or low cost, or if the TV is an expensive model or not becomes irrelevant. The issue is not stewardship, but meeting family responsibilities.

I once heard that drug use is a terrible waste of money, implying poor stewardship. In my opinion, stewardship of money in this example is not the issue at all. Drug use is immoral, whether it costs money or not. If we accept that drug use is immoral I do not see how it could be argued that the person who finds the drug for $1 is "more stewardly" than the person spending $500.

'Stewardship is personal'

Can we as Christians ever stop considering the stewardship of money and simply enjoy our material blessings? While most people could see the principal of stewardship at work if we question the purchase of a $100,000 Mercedes, in principal, is that any different than adding a $100 stereo to a car?

While a pure definition of stewardship may be handy, coming up with one could very well require an accompanying set of rules and regulations. This could put us in the same trap which the Pharisees laid for themselves. Stewardship, like our faith, is personal, and as such, I cannot give the answers. But it is a question worth pursuing as individuals.

Clarence Bick is a financial planner in Ancaster, Ont.

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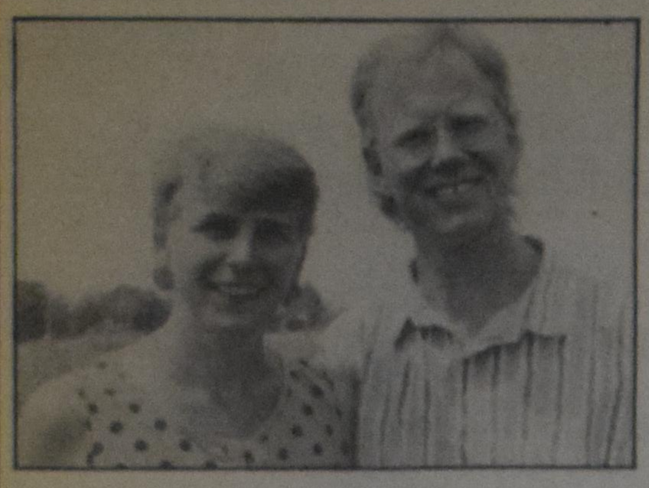
Advice



Peter and Marja are IN

Dear P & M:

I am taking a course in palliative care (care for the terminally ill). "Imagery" is becoming increasingly popular for controlling pain. Should Christians who are in a palliative care situation be wary of such a practice as being New Age?

Imagery is a pain management strategy in which the patient, with the use of mental images, "leaves" the body, thereby "escaping" from the pain.

Dear Palliative Care Student:

It's a fact that imagination can be harnessed to lift our spirits and ease our pain. All of us have lost ourselves in a good book or movie. Music has soothed not only King Saul's troubled heart but ours as well. The memory of a summer holiday or a special family event can warm us when we're cold or lonely.

The definition of "imagery" which you provided may have New Age connotations. Christian caregivers who use visualization to relax clients facing chemotherapy or extraordinary pain will not assist them to "leave their bodies." Instead they will encourage patients to imagine a place where they've been before; a safe or happy place. Where possible, they will help patients focus on the Lord's healing, helping hands.

New Age is pantheistic — it believes that everything is god. In fact, *we* are god. Since we are divine, we can help and even heal ourselves. New Age is also relativistic. It is free-floating and non-specific. We have heard of palliative care workers who ask patients to image an external light, a radiant white light, which surrounds and envelopes them and transports them away. This kind of visualization is light-years away from picturing the Light of the world named Jesus.

Imaging, in and of itself, is a healthy and normal use of fantasy and imagination to escape pain and bring some calm. Visualization certainly beats prescribing more and more pills. In that sense imagery can be a good tool we have at our disposal.

But whether it is a good or bad tool depends on the kind of content that one brings to the imagery. You can invest it with New Age ideas and concepts which leave you in your own strength; or you can invest it with Christian ideas and concepts which place you in God's strength. For example, we have heard of a secular university professor who teaches his students to help their patients visualize the white cells and cancer cells battling each other — but in a way which assumes godlike control of our own destinies. Such positive visualization can be used by a Christian, however, in a way which sees our body processes as God-created and cancer as a result of the Fall. Focusing positively and quite vividly in that way on our body's ability to fight disease is not wrong and can be very helpful in the healing process.

Remember that Christian imagination and biblical visions were given to believers centuries before the actress and author Shirley MacLaine popularized the New Age movement. In exile, the psalmist brought to mind the memory of Jerusalem (Ps. 42). In the face of persecution John envisioned the New Jerusalem (Revelation). In the face of suffering and pain the Christian is comforted by the mental image of being cradled by Christ.

Your question is very relevant. Other Christian professionals in counselling and medicine are also carefully evaluating the things they hear. We appreciate your letter and we hope that this week's column has opened this topic in a helpful way.

God bless you as you prepare to work in a palliative care unit. If you enter this field you will need a tremendous amount of support from the Lord, your family, your friends and your colleagues. You, too, will need to use some imagery and visualize God's supportive arms around you as you do your work with those who are dying. Otherwise the daily reality of pain and death will be too much for you to carry over the long term.

Dear Readers:

We find ourselves overwhelmed by all the flyers and newspaper inserts urging us to "shop till we drop." Our Christmas advice to you and to ourselves is to keep it simple this year. Jesus came among us as a tiny baby in a lowly manger in a cattle shed. His birth was accompanied with angelic praise and human wonder and worship. It was not his purpose to launch a million marketing campaigns and to lure a billion consumers to spend well beyond their means.

On his latest album, "Nothing But a Burning Light," Bruce Cockburn sings about "a Christmas gift you don't have to buy." Let's focus on this greatest gift and "fix our eyes on Jesus" (Heb. 12: 2). The Christmas story makes it clear that the best celebration occurs in the simplest circumstances.

Blessed Christmas, everyone!

Write to: P&M
c/o Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam De Silva, Ineke Brouwer-Parlevliet, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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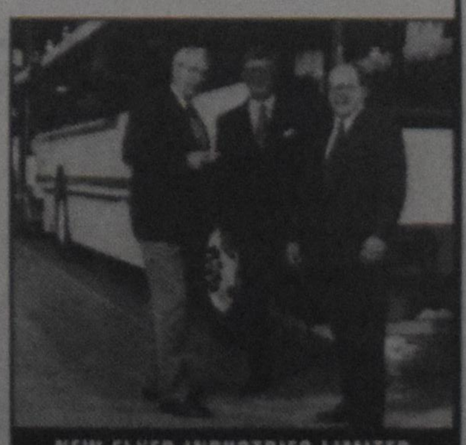

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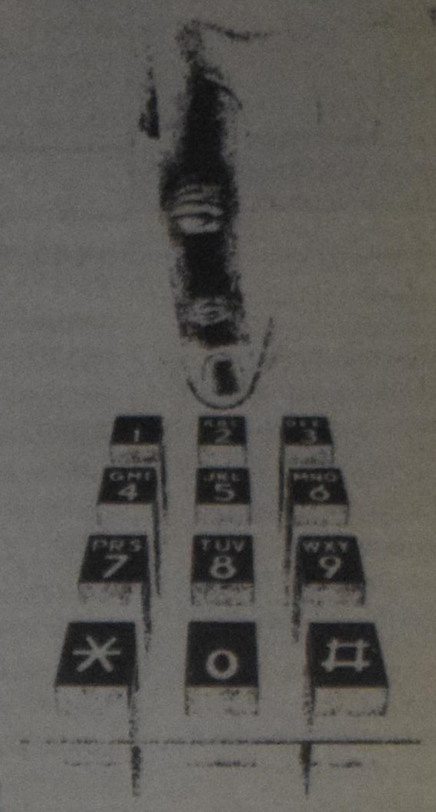

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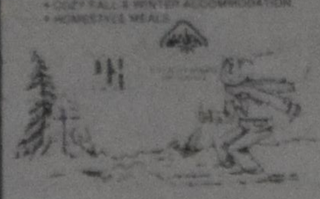

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a) *Calvinist Contact* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format, *unless you instruct us otherwise.*

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax are *not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Calvinist Contact* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

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Christmas Greetings

VAN MARRUM:

To my family and all my friends: Have a blessed merry Christmas and a happy New Year.
Gerlof Van Marrum, Rock St. 143, Box 59, Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

A blessed Christmas and a happy New Year to all our children, grandchildren, family and friends from: Mr. & Mrs. Thys Rumph, R.R. #1, Alma, ON N0B 1A0

Thanks

KAMERMAN:

Adrian and Janna, would like to thank all of you who shared in making our 60th wedding anniversary such an unforgettable time.
Thanks for all the cards, flowers, gifts and congratulations.
We especially give thanks to God for his rich blessing in these 60 years as a family.

VAN HARMELEN:

We would like to express our thanks to all our friends for cards, flowers, visits and phonecalls.
It was overwhelming. We are not able to write you all personally, but we did appreciate it all very much, especially your prayers, kindness and sympathy. God bless you.
Mrs. Liz Van Harmelen and family.
Address: Holland Chr. Homes, 7900 MacLaughlin Rd. S., Trinity Tower #407, Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

WEVER:

Jacob and Catharina Wever wish to thank everyone who remembered them on their 60th wedding anniversary.
Your cards, gifts, visits and good wishes were very much appreciated.
Thank you again,
The family.

Adoption

HOEKSTRA:

Rick and Eileen (nee Middeljans), praise God for evidence of his faithfulness.

LINDSAY FAITH

was born on Oct. 11, 1991, and God's wondrous gift arrived at home on Nov. 13, 1991.
Second grandchild for John and Margaret Middeljans and thirteenth for Bill and Betty Hoekstra.

Births

VANDE MEENT - OOSTERHOF:

"You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps. 139: 13b-14).
We, John and Diane, with thanksgiving and praise to God, joyfully announce the early arrival of our first child,

JEFFREY GEORGE

born Oct. 31, 1991.
Jeffrey is the 13th grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. B. Oosterhof of Athens, Ont., and the eighth grandchild for Mrs. J. Vande Meent of Bowmanville, Ont.
Home address: 7-D Banner Rd., Nepean, ON K2H 8T3

ZANTINGH:

"Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them" (Ps. 127: 4-5).
With much praise and thankfulness to our Creator, we Harry and Wilma welcome into our family

NATHAN JOHN

born on June 23, 1991.
Delighted big brothers are Adam, Matthew and Joel.
Sharing in our joy are grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Burt Greidanus of Londesboro, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. Bert Zantingh of Smithville, Ont.
Nathan is another great-grandchild for Mr. and Mrs. Henry Zantingh Sr. and Mrs. Aaltje Van Donkersgoed.
Home address: Box 2136, Taber, AB T0K 2G0

Marriage

TIESMA-SCHENK:

Henk and Claire Tiesma and Karl and Ineke Schenk are happy to announce the marriage of their children,

KIMBERLY FELISE
and
WILLIAM CLARENCE

on Dec. 28, 1991, at 3:00 p.m. in the Second Chr. Ref. Church, Brampton, Ont.
Future address: 100 Hawthorn Ave., Stouffville, ON L4A 4S9

For Sale/For Rent

For sale or rent: **three-bedroom bungalow with single-car garage**, on paved road, close to Chr. school bus routes and Chr. Ref. churches. Two miles to highways 9, 27 and 400. Immediately available.
Contact Andrew at (416) 939-7173 or (416) 853-3737

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Cor and Gré Lof (nee DeBoer) on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary!

Amsterdam St. Catharines
1941 1991

We hope to celebrate, God willing, on Dec. 26, 1991, in St. Catharines, the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents and great-grandparents,

COR and GRÉ LOF
(nee DeBoer)

Mom and Dad's anniversary actually comes the day before we celebrate the birth of the Saviour of this world. We have so much to celebrate and to give thanks for. As your family, who care about you and love you, we thank you for showing us the Way and for your many years of faithful love and prayer for us. We wish you God's continued care and nearness.
"But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24: 15b).
Liz & Henk — Victoria, B.C.
Reny & Jim — Grand Rapids, Mich.
Dick (deceased) & Linda — Oost huizen, the Netherlands
Gerry & Harma — St. Catharines, Ont.
Rob & Zee — Toronto, Ont.
Fred & Nel — Beamsville, Ont.
16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
Address of mom and dad:
19 Harcove St., St. Catharines, ON L2N 1W7

1956 December 22 1991

Wedding text: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; The Lord make His face shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace" (Num. 6: 24-26).
With praise and thanks to God, we announce the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents,

JAMES and ALICE KOOISTRA
(nee VanderMeulen)

It is our prayer that the Lord will continue to surround them with his love and uphold them in the palm of his hand.
Love and congratulations from,
Henry († 1978)
Bill & Rita — Williamsburg, Ont.
Megan, Alyssa, Kurt († 1989), Kayla
Wilma & John — Goose Bay, Labrador
Lawrence, Sara, Bethany
Trudy — at home
Milton — at home
Home address: R.R. #1, Williamsburg, ON K0C 2H0

Anniversaries

1961 December 23 1991

We are thankful for God's faithfulness to our parents,

PETER and HILDA BERGHUIS
(nee Nauta)

and for the many blessings we have received through them.
Congratulations Mom and Dad on your 30th wedding anniversary!
With our love,
Henry — Osnabruck, Germany
Wendy & Bryan Hummel — Nepean
Marlene & Maarthen Reinders — Toronto
Chris & Catherine (fiancee) — Grand Rapids, Mich.
Home address: 8 Holcroft St., Ingersoll, ON N5C 1B4

Aduard, Gr. Caistor Center, Ont.
1966 December 22 1991

By the grace of God and with thanksgiving in our hearts, we joyfully announce the 25th anniversary of our parents,

WIETE and RIKSTINA DE JONGE
(nee Spanninga)

We thank you for the loving guidance that you have provided for us. It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will continue to surround you with his love and bless you as you truly have been a blessing to us. With love and congratulations from:
Harald de Jonge — Guelph, Ont. & Elaine Brus (girlfriend) — Red Coll.
Mary Ann & Kenn Feyen — Norwich, Ont.
Home address: R.R. #3, Caistor Center, ON L0R 1E0

Obituaries

Duurswoude, Fr. Brampton, Ont.
1907 1991

On Nov. 15, 1991, the Lord called home his child,

RICHARD POSTHUMUS

He leaves in the care of the Lord, his wife,
Sandra Posthumus-Greydanus, daughter,
Jeanette Makkinga
six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.
Home address: 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Apt. 208 T.T., Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

Obituaries

Psalm 121

On Nov. 11, 1991, it pleased the Lord to take to himself on this Remembrance Day, his child, our dearly beloved mom, oma, and great-oma at the age of 82 years

TINIE (TIETJE) ADEMA
(nee van der Werf)

predeceased by her husband Anne Adema (1984).
Praise be to God for giving us loving, God-fearing parents.
Always remembered by:
Grace & Neal VanGalen — London
Con & Arlene VanGalen (Jackie), Anita & Ed Hofstee
Vera & Bill Rekker — Brampton
Arthur, Paul
Wietze & Sharon Adema — Grand Rapids, Mich.
Jordan, Justine, Rebeka
Mary & Ted Jurrius — Brampton
Mark, Tonya
Reina & Bill Pagie — Montreal
Derek, Danielle
Remembered also by one surviving brother, Arend van der Werf, in Heerenveen, the Netherlands.
Funeral service was conducted by Pastor Peter Van Egmond at the Holland Chr. Homes in Brampton, Ont.

"Zalig zijn de doden die in de Here sterven."

Op woensdag, 27 november, 1991 heeft de Here uit ons midden weggenomen

MR. JOSEPH FARAGO

op de leeftijd van 79 jaar.
Namens de bewoners van South Chatham Village, 40 Elm Street, Chatham, Ont.

Stolwijk, Brampton,
the Netherlands Ont.

On Nov. 16, 1991, the Lord called home our dear moiher, sister, grand- and great-grandmother,

CORNELIA MARGE HOOGENBOOM
(nee Meerkerk)

at the age of 89 years, at Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.
Wife of the late Arie Hoogenboom.
Pre-deceased by daughter Maria Adriana Spies.
Lovingly remembered by:
William & Adriana Hoogenboom — Mountain, Ont.
Cornelis Meerkerk — the Netherlands
Loving grandma to six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.
The funeral took place on Nov. 19, 1991, at the Marsden & McLaughlin Funeral Home, Iroquois, Ont., Rev. Dirk Velthuizen officiating.

Praise be to God!

On Nov. 28, 1991, the Lord took one of our members,

MRS. HELEN RUYF

to her eternal home, after a lengthy illness.
Our prayers and thoughts will continue for her husband and family.
Fruitland Coffee Break.

Eesterga Bowmanville
Nov. 1, 1904 Nov. 23, 1991

After a serious illness of four months

JAN SEMPLONIUS

died peacefully in the Lord in his 88th year. He was predeceased by his loving wife, Zwaantje Klompmaker, in 1959.
II Cor. 5: 17, 18.
Lovingly remembered by his children:
Henry & Jean
Leona (deceased) & Jim Strikwerda
Ed & Lisa
Trix & Herman Haringa
27 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren.
Correspondence address:
H. Semplonius, 10 Waverley Rd., Bowmanville, ON L1C 1K9

Classified

Obituaries

Wons, Smithers, B.C.
the Netherlands
Aug. 22, 1924 Nov. 22, 1991
The Lord ended his suffering and took home to everlasting glory his child

YNZE HUISMAN

Beloved husband of Ada Huisman (nee Steeneveld).
Dear father and grandfather of:
Randy & Ruby Huisman — Terrace, B.C.
Lee Anne, Stephanie
Peter & Maggie Huisman — Ottawa Ont.
Kyle, Adrian
The funeral was held in Smithers, B.C., on Nov. 27, 1991, with Rev. B. Beukema officiating.
Home address: P.O. Box 216, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

On Nov. 27, 1991, the Lord called home our beloved wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

AALTJE SNOEIJER
(nee Bruulsema)

in her 88th year.
Cath. Sunday 1.
Beloved wife of Johannes Snoeijer
Dear mother of:
Tina & Ralph Tamming — Strathroy, Ont.
Harry & Gwen Snoeijer — Coaldale, Alta.
Linda & John Van Vliet — Lethbridge, Alta.
Joke De DeWeegh — Assen, the Netherlands
15 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren
Pre-deceased by son Albert and grandson Hans (the Neth.).
Funeral service was held on Saturday, Nov. 30, 1991, in Strathroy East. Chr. Ref. Church, Rev. J. Nutma officiating.
Correspondence address:
175 Carroll St., Strathroy, ON N7C 3P5

"But he said to me: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'" (II Cor. 12:9).
On Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1991,

SANDRA STEENBERGEN
(nee DeGraaf)

peacefully surrendered her life's cares to her heavenly Father, in her 35th year.
She will be sadly missed by her husband, Peter, and children, Karen, Donald, Lisa and Kenny, all of Drayton.
She was pre-deceased by infant daughter Charlene in 1986.
Dear daughter-in-law of Lubbert and Alice Steenbergen of Beamsville, Ont.,
and sister-in-law of:
Bill & Henriette Steenbergen — Cambridge, Ont.
Henry & Bernice Steenbergen — Brighton, Ont.
Fanny & Nick Geleynse — Clinton, Ont.
Marg & Jess Terpstra — Strathroy, Ont.
Alina & Ralph Wigboldus — Kitchener, Ont.
Hilma Steenbergen — Beamsville, Ont.
and fondly remembered by her many nephews and nieces.
Correspondence address: Peter Steenbergen, R.R. #2, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0

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Phone: 1 (904) 589-1323.

Teachers

BOWMANVILLE, Ont.: Knox Christian School requires a **Grade 5** teacher, due to maternity leave, as of Feb. 1, 1992.
The ability to teach French and/or band is a definite asset.
Please send letter of application and resume, by Dec. 15, 1991 to:
Mr. W.M. Helmus, Principal
Knox Christian School
410 Scugog St., R.R. #1
Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2
Tel.: (416) 623-5871

LACOMBE, Alta.: Lacombe Chr. School with approximately 330 students in K-9, located in Central Alberta, invites applications from teachers for September 1992. There is an opening in the **elementary grades** for a **music teacher.**
Applicants must qualify for Alberta teacher certification. Send resume to:
Wernart van Deventer
Principal
Lacombe Chr. School,
P.O. Box 1749,
Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0,
Phone: (403) 782-6531

LACOMBE, Alta.: Central Alberta Chr. High School. God continues to bless this grade 10-12 high school with continued growth. We anticipate hiring **additional staff** for the 1991-92 school year. Our community is excited with the challenge and privilege of providing Christian education to Central Alberta area students. Consider joining this new high school. Specialists in the area of **Humanities and/or French** are particularly required.
Address inquiries/resumes to:
Jack Vanden Pol, Principal
Box 958, Lacombe, AB T0C 1S0
Phone (403) 782-4535

LEDUC, Alta.: Covenant Chr. School; If you can provide leadership to an innovative and enthusiastic school community, apply for the **teaching principalship** at Covenant Chr. School in Leduc, Alta. (P-9, 168 students). We are looking for a dedicated, organized, creative team leader for the 1992/93 school year. If you wish to apply or want more information, please contact: Gayle Monsma, Covenant Chr. School, Box 3827, Leduc, AB T9E 6M7. Phone (403) 986-8353. Application deadline is January 15, 1992.

Teachers

PORT PERRY, Ont.: Scugog Chr. School invites applications for a **Grade 4/5/6 combination position,** due to maternity leave, for the period beginning March 1, 1992, to the end of the schoolyear. Address all applications and inquiries to:
Mrs. Peggy Michel,
14080 Old Scugog Rd.,
Blackstock, ON L0B 1B0,
Phone: (416) 986-5262

ROCKY MTN. HOUSE, ALTA.: Rocky Christian School is accepting applications for a **Grade 4** teaching position. This position will be available from Feb. 1, 1992, until June 30, 1992, due to maternity leave. Ability to teach music is an asset.
Please forward letter of application, statement of philosophy of Christian Education, transcripts and resume to:
Mr. Wm. Slofstra, Principal
Rocky Christian School
5204-54 Ave., Rocky Mtn. House
AB T0M 1T3
Phone: (403) 845-3516

SMITHVILLE, Ont.: The Smithville District Chr. High School is looking for a **part-time teacher for English or Bible**, for semester 2, beginning on Jan. 30, 1992.
If interested, please call **M.B. Stroobosscher at (416) 957-3255.**

VANCOUVER, B.C.:
Vancouver Christian School, a denominationally diverse community currently offering Kindergarten through Grade 8, is planning to expand their junior high program and will require a **Grade 9** teacher for the 1992/93 school year. Persons with a strong Math/Sciences background in education with interest in teaching P.E., Art or Computer, are invited to apply.
Please direct enquiries to:
Ellen Visser
Junior High Program Co-ordinator
Vancouver Christian School
3496 Mons Dr. Vancouver
BC V5M 3E6

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Resumes may be sent to:
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Richmond Christian Reformed Church
6500 Maple Road
Richmond, B.C. V7E 1G5

Classified/Events

Brampton Second Christian Reformed Church

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(ordained/unordained)

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"One cannot read this book without admiring these women and thanking God for all of them. Why are we so sinfully slow in giving full recognition to God's own gifts?" — ANDREW KUYVENHOVEN
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Calendar of Events

Dec. 14	The "Listowel Concert Singers" perform "Handel's Messiah" with Symphony Orchestra and soloists, Trinity United Church, **Listowel**, Ont., at 8 p.m.
Dec. 14	Christmas Concert by the OCMA (director Leendert Kooij), organist Andre Knevel, Willowdale United Church (Kenneth Ave.), **Willowdale**, Ont., at 8 p.m.
Dec. 14	Handel's "Messiah" performed by Chatham's "Laudate Dominum Choir" and organist Dick De Jonge, 8 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster**, Ont. Tickets at the door. Advance tickets available at Redeemer College.
Dec. 15	Advent/Christmas concert by the "Cantata Singers" and the "Collegium Musicum Male Chorus," 8 p.m., Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont.
Dec. 18	Christmas Concert by the OCMA (director Leendert Kooij), organist Andre Knevel, Rehoboth Chr. Ref. Church (Scugog), **Bowmanville**, Ont., at 8 p.m.
Dec. 20	Candlelight service with "Adoramus Maranatha Choir," 8 p.m., Mount Hamilton CRC, **Hamilton**, Ont.
Dec. 21	Christmas Carol-Sing with organist Andre Knevel, 8 p.m., Providence CRC, **Beamsville**, Ont.
Dec. 21	Christmas concert by the Christian Choir "New Life" and the Garden City Christian Men's Chorus, 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **St. Catharines**, Ont.
Dec. 21	Christmas concert by the combined St. Thomas Male Choir "Crescendo" and the Ladies' Choir "Gloria in Excelsis," with guest group "Harmony Handbells," 7:30 p.m., First United Church, **St. Thomas**, Ont.
Dec. 22	Candlelight service with "Adoramus Maranatha Choir," 7:30 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **York**, Ont.
Dec. 29	Organ recital by John W. Vandertuin, 3 p.m., Grace Anglican Church, (West & Albion), **Brantford**, Ont. Freewill offering.

Merry Christmas and happy New Year

Check out our classifieds for possible teaching positions.

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Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Change in worship times

— Ingersoll, Ont., CRC; Effective Dec. 22, morning worship will move to 10 a.m. from 9:30 a.m.; the second service will move to 7:30 p.m. from 2:30 p.m.

— Riverside, Wellandport, Ont.: Effective immediately, morning worship will be held at 9 a.m., the second service at 2:30 p.m. *(See short news item, p. 8, regarding the split in this congregation.)*

— Immanuel, Hamilton, Ont., will hold its evening service at 6 p.m. (instead of 7 p.m.), effective Jan. 5-April 26, 1992.

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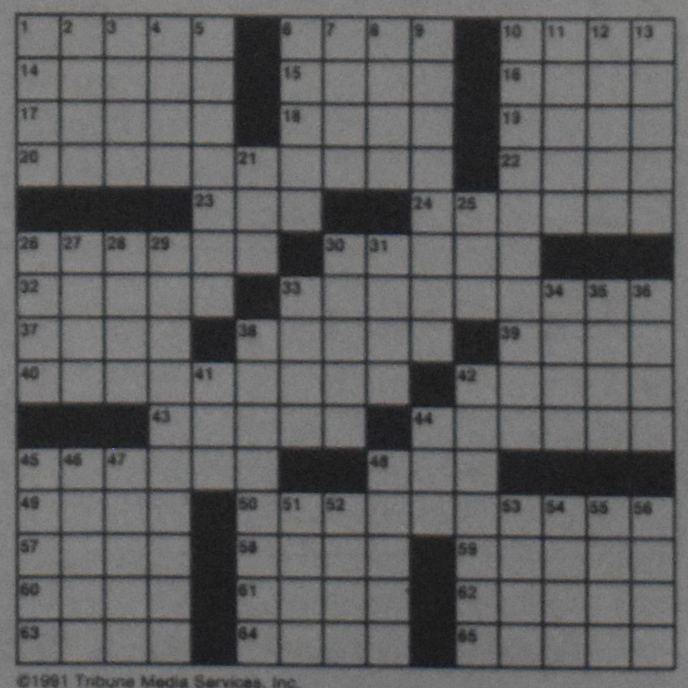
Weekly puzzle

by George Urquhart



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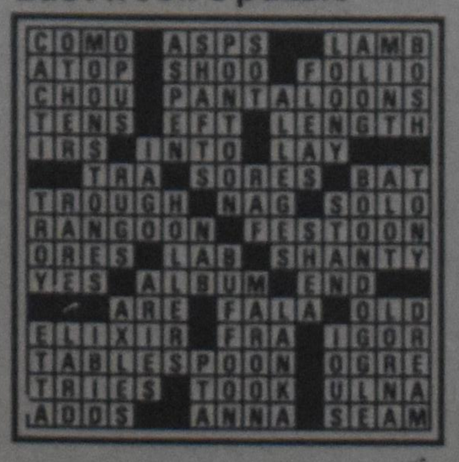
ACROSS
1 Reddish tree
6 Casa room
10 Put to work
14 Down East
15 Graceful horse
16 Hot place
17 Cool to people
18 Prepare the salad
19 Latvian city
20 Good judgment
22 Center of authority
23 Disencumber
24 Heckle
26 William Tell for one
30 San —, CA
32 Resort lake
33 Beatles' hometown
37 Through
39 Montreal player
40 Refused to quit
42 Brought to bay
43 Les —-Unis
44 Strut
45 City on the Loire
48 Metric unit
49 Gen. Bradley
50 Hearty ha-ha
57 Actress Thompson
58 Shamrock land
59 Money
60 OK town
61 Behold: Lat.
62 Relative by marriage
63 Venture
64 Norse god
65 Holds back

DOWN
1 Asian nurse
2 Fr. composer
3 Fashion designer
4 "Country" Slaughter
5 Game official
6 Fulfilled
7 Elvis — Presley
8 Young woman
9 No-show
10 Western
11 Vine-covered
12 August
13 Related maternally
21 Knight's title
25 Always to poets
26 Upon
27 Choice review
28 "Moonstruck" actress
29 Shrewd bargaining act
30 Bogs down
31 Enthusiastic
33 Certain European
34 Bovines
35 Oil cartel
36 Ore vein
38 White —
41 Adherent: suff.
42 Latticework
44 Prior to: pref.
45 Pried
46 IA village
47 Lowest point
48 "Lou Grant" actor
51 Theater section: abbr.
52 Puerto —
53 Relative
54 Western school letters
55 Drab
56 Chops down

Last week's puzzle



Books

Robert VanderVennen, page editor

Frye on biblical words and meaning

The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion, by Northrop Frye. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. ISBN 0-80206865-0. Softcover, 90 pp., $10.95. Reviewed by Douglas Loney, English Department, Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

A distinguished professor of English at the University of Toronto for more than half a century, a literary critic and critical theorist of genuinely international repute since the publication (in 1957) of *The Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye was the most influential Canadian scholar of his generation.

For Christian readers of literature Frye's work holds special interest, for he was also an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada, and the author of a formidable, two-part study of the Bible and literature: *The Great Code* (1981) and *Words With Power* (1990). *The Double Vision* was Northrop Frye's last book, published just after his death in the spring of this year.

Chapter 1, "The Double Vision of Language," springs most directly from Frye's literary-critical interests in language and myth. It lays the theoretical foundation for the entire volume, "a basis for the openness of belief that is characteristic of the United Chuch (p. 20). This foundation is, fittingly, a myth of Frye's own devising: an evolutionary perspective upon social and religious history by which he distinguishes between "primitive" and "mature" societies, and discerns "an evolution toward freedom" from the former to the latter.

This book's title derives from a poem by William Blake:

For double the vision my eyes do see,
And a double vision is always with me:
With my inward eye 'tis an old man grey;
With my outward a thistle across my way.

"The general idea," Frye remarks disarmingly, "seems to be that simple sense perception is not enough." This "single vision" he identifies with the members of a "primitive" society, each of them a representative of the "natural man" of I Cor. 2: 14 who cannot understand "the things that come from the Spirit of God...because they are spiritually discerned." By contrast, Frye argues, the members of a truly mature society (as, for instance, the United Church?) are equipped to exercise Blake's "double vision," by which alone it is possible to understand spiritual truths.

Descriptive accuracy is 'pseudo-literalism'

Frye argues against "the descriptive accuracy of the historical events recorded in the New Testament..." (p. 15). He describes this as "pseudo-literalism," which falsifies Scripture by ignoring the fact that it is couched in "the language of literature, the language of myth and metaphor."

Much of the Bible demands a more subtle interpretation than would a document couched in merely propositional language. It demands in fact a *literary* appreciation. Frye rightly observes, for instance, that the biblical pattern of typology, by which John the Baptist at once "is and *is not*" Elijah come again, may be understood only when one sees that such identifications are expressed in the language of metaphor. But when he goes on to argue that the language of the Bible functions *only* upon this level, surely he is as bound by "single vision" as any absolute literalist could be.

"The Double Vision of God," a final chapter written only "after considerable hesitation," does indeed flow logically and even inevitably from the argument developed in the first three chapters. It is likely to lose the sympathy of all but the most theologically liberal of readers.

Frye implies that the Bible is riddled with the kind of errors that derive from the "single vision" which sees in God "the reflection of human panic and rage, its love of cruelty and domination....The double vision sees this as taking the face of God in vain, as it were, and tries to separate the human mirror from God's reality" (p. 83).

Northrop Frye was an insightful literary scholar and his works contribute much to our understanding of the beauty and power of language in general, and of the language of the Bible in particular. *The Double Vision* reminds us again that, although it is clearly more than "mere" literature, the Bible is nevertheless couched in the *language* of literature, and thus demands for its fullest understanding and appreciation different in kind from that suited to propositional discourse.

However, many of Frye's conclusions in *The Double Vision* derive from premises unacceptable to readers with a high view of Scripture, who will weigh this book's argument against the Bible's own claims to inspiration, historicity and the accuracy of factual details.

Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Vanishing act

"For my days vanish like smoke...." (Ps. 102: 3).

When theatre critic Dorothy Parker was given a small, dingy cubbyhole of an office in the Metropolitan Opera House building in New York City, she seemed to disappear. No one ever came to see her in her out-of-the way quarters and she became lonely and depressed. In fact, when the signwriter came to paint her name on the door, she asked him not to put her name there, but just to write: GENTLEMEN. She thought that would bring a few men into her office, if only by mistake!

Disappearing people

Loneliness is written all over Psalm 102 too. In fact, the title that stands at its head is so unusual that scholars for centuries have remarked about it and speculated on it. It says: "*A prayer of an afflicted man, When he is faint and pours out his lament before the Lord.* Who could this be? When did he write? What happened to him that he cried out so forlornly?

The possibilities are many: a Davidic king in the 7th century? Someone left in Jerusalem after its destruction in 586 B.C.? An heir to the royal throne now in exile in Babylon? We don't know for sure. We probably never will.

But that doesn't take away the power of this prayer. It's a prayer that's been whispered a million times in a billion settings by a trillion lonely people. The words may vary but the prayer is always the same.

Fragmented society

For the author of Psalm 102, loneliness is the natural byproduct of a society without a centre. In his world the temple had either been neglected or destroyed, and culture was fragmented and scattered as a result. With no spiritual glue in the *big* relationship of life, all the other relationships fell apart quickly. Loneliness and alienation were the outcome.

And we experience it ourselves. The church may not be a perfect organization, but where it ceases to exist or where it becomes something less than the visible earthly dwelling of God, society is cheated and cheapened. Just listen to the cries that erupt from whatever's left of the old Soviet Union these days. North American society, too, even with its proliferation of church buildings and "Christian" organizations, often experiences the same malaise. Shel Silverstein wrote a biting little verse about such a fragmented and lonely world. He calls it "The Little Boy and the Old Man":

Said the little boy, "Sometimes I drop my spoon."
Said the old man, "I do that too."
Said the little boy, "Often I cry."
The old man answered, "So do I."
"But worst of all," said the boy, "it seems grownups don't pay attention to me."
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled hand.
"I know what you mean," said the little old man.

You know the people he's writing about, don't you?

One hope

Whoever the "Afflicted Man" of Psalm 102 was, he saw only a single hope for a change in his condition. It may seem strange because it has nothing to do with "social programs," at least not on the surface. All he wanted, all he pleaded for was a return to worship. He asked for a place to worship. He begged for people with whom he could worship. And he pleaded for God to be worthy of the worship directed his way.

Amazing as it sounds, he honestly believed that that would pull his world back together. Maybe it's worth a try for us.

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church, London, Ont.

Send your questions to Peter and Marja c/o Calvinist Contact. Confidentiality is assured.

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